DEDICATED TO RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

# PETS

Dr Katrina's Top Travel Tips

## AUSSIE DOG LOVER'S GUIDE
Where you need to go

## TREIBBALL
The latest dog sport craze

## MUSCOVY MADNESS
Not just a little black duck

**Thai-rific**
Fall for the Korat

AWESOME EASTER TREATS (minus the CHOCOLATE)

## PINT-SIZED pooch
We go ga-ga for the Chihuahua


THE SEASONAL SPECIAL ISSUE

Universal Magazines

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53

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## WE'RE DOTTY FOR DALMATIANS
(Find out why!)




TURN OVER FOR OUR SMALL ANIMAL SPECIAL

I like to live in groups

I like to jump for joy

I purr when I'm happy

# THIS EASTER, GET TO KNOW SOMEBUNNY!

Did you know that when a bunny is super happy, he jumps into the air and flicks his legs? It's called **a binky**. Just like cats and dogs, rabbits all have a unique personality.

Sadly, rabbits are often abused in cruel animal tests, all for the sake of shampoo or make-up. Look for products that say **'Not tested on animals'** next time you're at the supermarket.

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the voice for animals

PETS
MARCH 2016 ISSUE#53

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# from the editor

Hi *PETS* readers,

Can you believe it's Easter already? It seems like only yesterday I was sitting around the Christmas tree with Berry and Danger, and now we're preparing for a few days of eating delicious treats and spending more time with the family.

One way we're getting into the Easter spirit with the dogs is by holding an Easter Treat Hunt in our backyard. My husband and I will lock Berry and Danger inside while we plant some of their favourite love'em treats throughout the yard — in the grass, next to pot plants, on the stairs — and then we'll let them loose to go and find them all. Not only is this a fun way to spend the morning together, it also helps them practise their scent work, exercising their brains as well as their legs. Sounds like a win all round, right?

For more fun ways you can show your pet you care without resorting to the toxic chocolate, which you should never let your pet near, turn to page 42.

Easter also means public holidays, which means more time to spend out of the office with our furry friends. This season, Danger, Berry and I are determined to give the newest sporting craze to hit the dog world a go. Have you heard of treibball? Up until the end of 2015, we hadn't, but now we can't wait to get out there and give this activity a go. We think ball-crazy Berry will go nuts for it. We learn a thing or two more about it in our feature on page 32.

Of course, that's not all we have in store for you this issue. We also look at some great places to take your dog out and about all throughout the country in our feature on page 34, and for those of you going away these holidays, check out Dr Katrina's travel tips on page 56. We also have some fun breed features on the Korat, Chihuahua, Muscovy duck and more, so there's bound to be something to suit your interests.

So sit back with a piece of chocolate (in preparation for the Easter treats ahead) and enjoy this issue of *PETS*.

**Lauren, Editor**
**pets@universalmagazines.com.au**

Lauren xo

**P.S.** Don't forget to turn the magazine over for our special flip issue!

## WANT MORE OF *PETS*?

Connect with us on Facebook at **facebook.com/PETSmagazine**, visit out blog at **petsmagazine.wordpress.com** or sign up for our bi-monthly e-newsletter (link available on our blog).

TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND

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# CRITTER CALENDAR

CHECK OUT THE ANIMAL EVENTS THE *PETS* TEAM ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS MONTH. BY JEREMY NIGRO.

NSW

## APRIL 8–10 ROYAL BATHURST SHOW

The Royal Bathurst Show has been running since 1858 and is regarded as one of the best country shows west of Sydney. Tens of thousands of people flock to the Bathurst Showgrounds every year to indulge in yummy food stalls, exciting rides and, best of all, the multitude of animal attractions and competitions. It'll be exciting to see what they have in store this year, although we think it'll be hard to beat the adorable piglet racing held in the past. If you live in country New South Wales, then this is a must-attend event with entertainment on display for all ages. For more information and to order your tickets, visit **bathurstshow.com.au**

AUSTRALIA

## MARCH 23 NATIONAL PUPPY DAY

While this is an American holiday, if there's one day a year that everyone can get behind it's National Puppy Day! Seriously, who doesn't love puppies? If you're one of those lucky people to have a puppy, or a dog because they were puppies once, then March 23 is the day to spoil them and show them how much you love them. The day was founded in 2006 by celebrity pet expert Colleen Paige and has become so popular that it is now recognised internationally.

National Puppy Day is also about helping save orphaned puppies around the world and educating people about how to raise their pups responsibly. If you were thinking about getting a puppy, then there's no better day to do it than on National Puppy Day, and no better place than your nearest rescue organisation. Many shelters and animal orphanages run special events on the day, so what better way to celebrate our favourite furry friends by saving an animal and welcoming a new puppy to the family at the same time? For more information, visit **nationalpuppyday.com** or visit your local rescue group's Facebook page or website.

GOT A PET-RELATED EVENT COMING UP? Email **pets@universalmagazines.com.au** and let us know. We'd love to hear about it.

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- ✗ Propylene glycol
- ✗ PABA
- ✗ SLS
- ✗ Soap
- ✗ Formaldehyde

Nasties that harm the environment:

- ✗ Sulphates
- ✗ Petrochemicals
- ✗ Silicones
- ✗ Animal Derivatives
- ✗ No Palm Oil
- ✗ Cruelty Free

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# paws for thought

## Write to *PETS*!

Do you have an amazing pet story or a hilarious animal joke to share? How about some feedback on one of our articles? Or did you recently get a new pet? *PETS* would love to hear from each and every one of you (and your furry buddies). Drop us a line at **Paws for thought/*PETS*, Locked Bag 154, North Ryde NSW 1670** or email **pets@universalmagazines.com.au** with "Paws for thought" as the subject heading. Letters, poems, photos, collages and drawings are also welcome. Be as creative as you like!

## We're cuckoo for Coco and Macey

Hi *PETS*,

My name is Lilliahna and I would like to introduce my two amazing pets: Coco and Macey! Coco is my dad's. She is a black Lab, and Macey is mine. She is a Staffy x Kelpie.

When Macey is chasing a ball, she always pounces on it. One day she was doing this and slid headfirst in to a wall! On the other hand Coco is smoochy and goofy. When I practice tennis, she always tries to steal the ball! I would be absolutely thrilled if you put this in your next issue.

**Kind Regards Lilliahna.**

**Ed:** *Thank you so much for writing in and sharing some information about Coco and Macey with us. They sound like very interesting pets — I bet there's never a dull moment at your place! They have such gorgeous little faces; we appreciate you sharing these fabulous pics with us.*

## Narrow miss

Hi *PETS*,

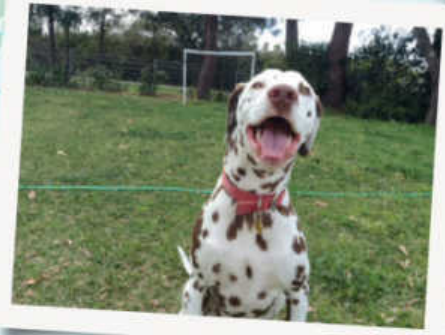
This is the amazing story of my canaries, Ollie and Louie. The other day Ollie was in his cage outside on the deck then the cage fell! Ollie then escaped.

The next day we got a new canary (Louie). We went home with a new canary and some goldfish. When we got home, we went outside to put our new fish in our pond. We then found our Ollie very much in one piece, which was lucky, considering there are so many cats around our house. But there was Ollie sitting by our pond. My dad got a net to get Ollie but it didn't work, so he caught Ollie with his hands instead. We have now used cable ties to make sure Ollie and Louie don't fly away again

P.S. Ollie is absolutely fine, as is Louie, but we do need a new cage now as Ollie's cage is far too small for both birds to fit.

**From Bri, via email**

**Ed:** *Wow! It sounds like Ollie had quite a lot of luck on his side, making it back to you and your family safely. Canaries are gorgeous birds, and we're glad you now have two of these fun and fabulous pets. Thanks so much for writing in and sharing this fascinating story with us.*



# DOTTY FOR DALMATIANS

Hey *PETS*,
I have a three-year-old pedigree Dalmatian called Charlie, who everyone loves. He's an American Dalmatian, so he isn't as big as you would think. He is also not black and white; he is a beautiful liver spotted boy. People often comment on his brown spots as they walk past our garden gate.

We also found out when we got him that Dalmatians have lovely smiles.

We got him from a breeder when he was eight weeks old and he was the cutest dog on the plane ... even the pilot got out to give him a pat!

We travelled around Australia in our caravan with Charlie. He slept in the canopy of our Ute but when it got really cold we just had to let him sleep in the caravan with us.

I think he is the best dog ever. I can't even imagine my life without my beautiful Charlie!

**From Zoe**

**Ed:** *Zoe, thanks so much for writing in and sharing your story of the gorgeous Charlie. He is a fabulous dog, and it sounds as if you to share a very strong connection. We hope you enjoy many more happy years together.*

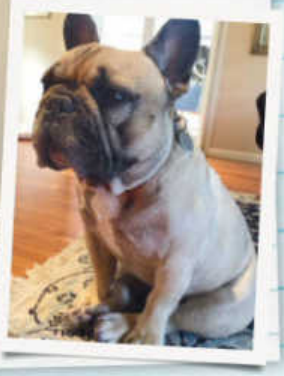
# PAW-SOME POETRY

Hi *PETS*!
My name is Katherine and I LOVE your magazines! They get delivered to me every month.
This is my French Bulldog, Leon, with his toy Dudley. The other pic is of him sitting down on what he thinks is HIS mat!
I play with little Leon every day and I love him SO much I even made a poem up about him:

He is a French bulldog, as you may know,
here are some things about him that
we will learn pronto!
NUMBER 1 he is fun
NUMBER 2 he eats anything
NUMBER 3 he likes trees to pee
NUMBER 4 when he sleeps, it's a bore!
NUMBER 5 he is definitely alive
NUMBER 6 he is as clever as sticks
NUMBER 7 he is not 11
And last of all, he is five
We sometimes call Leon The Leon King

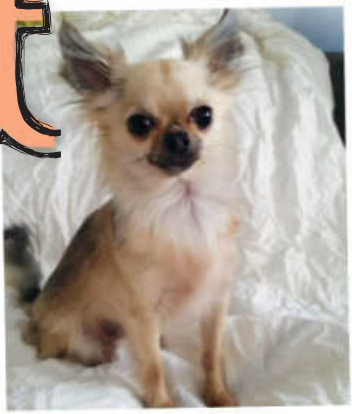
**Katherine, via email**

**Ed:** *Katherine, thanks so much for writing in! What a fabulous poem — I really enjoyed it. Leon sure is one cute dog. We can absolutely understand why you love him so very much.*



# MY pet

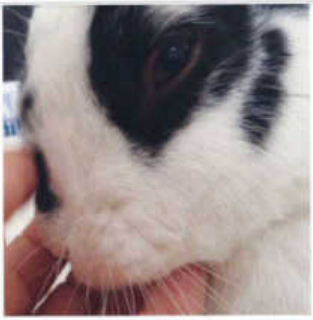
**Jane's** Jessie Rose and Boy, getting into the Christmas spirit.



**Jaime's** Tate is one good-looking pooch.

**Sonja's** Barso and Kato are truly good dogs — they help teach Sonja's foster dogs how to behave and settle in upon commencing their stay.

**Brooke's** Chinese Crested, Kitty, has a personality that is larger than life!



King Angel loves his pet human very, very much!

**Laura's** cheeky budgies sure are sweet!

# Ultimate Balance

*Dr Julie Summerfield*
*Leading Vet & Cat Expert*

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www.ultimatesindulge.com.au /UltimatesIndulge

For more cat advice from Dr. Julie, scan here

**Michelle's** Buddha and Michelangelo wait patiently for their crickets.

**Chelsie's** Jackson gets a bath on hot days to help relax and cool him down.

**Abbey's** Zac is a gorgeous lab — and he's a rescue, too! Thanks for saving this sweetie, Abbey.

## SEND US YOUR SNAPS!

Do you want your photo to appear here on our "My Pet" pages? Email a clear, sharp photo (1MB or larger) of your pet along with your name, mailing address, contact number and a few words about why you love your pet to **pets@universalmagazines.com.au** or send hard-copy photos to **My Pet/*PETS* magazine, Locked Bag 154, North Ryde NSW 1670**. Remember to make copies as the photos cannot be returned. Happy snapping!

**Alana** and **Wendy's** Paris just loves playing with her toys — clearly, she's a ball dog!

**Zoe's** Oscar and Oliver are best buds. We bet they cause some serious mischief.

We love inter-species love! Willow and Sweetie are seen here grabbing some downtime by the fan.

## CATRINE CATMOSPHERE TREAT BALL

Cats are hunters by nature. Stimulate your cat's curiosity with this unique treat dispenser. Filled with your cat's favourite treats the dispenser creates an unpredictable roll that engages the cat to chase it.

One size only 95mm.

Available in 2 colours Black or Magenta.

## STIMULO ACTIVITY FOOD CENTRE

The Aikiou Cat Stimulo Food Activity Centre provides engaging entertainment at feeding time. Aikiou have developed the activity centre to help your cat's digestion by slowing down the ingestion of food. The Stimulo also allows the cats to have fun poking around in all of the different tubes while they are looking for their food, you know how much your cat loves sticking their paws into any small spaces! The Aikiou Food Activity Centre will keep your cat entertained and engage their natural instincts while feeding for great physical and mental health.

## ANTI BARK COLLAR

This reliable, entry level no barking collar is weatherproof & sound activated. It is one of the most popular citronella spray collars on the market. The Collar stops dogs at the very moment they start barking.

Its comforting effect allows dogs to adapt easily and quietly to their environment while providing peace of mind for their owners.

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# pet TALES

Tameeka loves the gorgeous Peter.

## ATTENTION ALL PET LOVERS!

Tell us why you love your furry, fluffy, feathered, slippery, scaly or slimy friend for your chance to win a cool prize.

## CONGRATULATIONS, TAMEEKA!

You have won a 12-issue subscription to *PETS* magazine, ensuring you get the latest and greatest pet news delivered direct to your door every day for the next year. We hope you enjoy your prize.

# PETER RABBIT

## Tameeka's rabbit Peter sure is a special pet.

**My name is Tameeka and I have an awesome pet rabbit called Peter. I think that Peter is a very special rabbit because he has friends — two guinea pigs and a girl rabbit.**

By the way, Peter is a boy rabbit, and his favourite things to eat are rabbit pellets, carrots, cos lettuce, hay and cucumbers.

On a hot day, all the pets come inside to cool down and relax by lying down.

I think that we have a great bond together because I taught him to come out of his cage and follow me inside the house. Sometimes, if I'm lucky, my mum lets me bring Peter inside into my room to have a play.

I got Peter in 2014 and since then we have been best buddies. The first photo is Peter and his lizard friend Biggy; the second photo is Peter on the couch; and the third photo is Peter when I first got him. P

*Photos courtesy of Tameeka, via email*

Peter, spending some quality indoor time.

Peter and lizard Biggy are good friends.

# WIN A PAWSOME PRIZE PACK!

**Do you love your pet? Tell us a warm and fuzzy tale about the special bond you share with your best pal for a chance to win a really cool prize.**

## TO ENTER:

All you have to do is tell us in 400 words or less why your pet is so special and include a few clear, sharp photographs (1MB or larger) of your friend. Please also include your contact number and mailing address.

Send your entries to **Pet Tales/*PETS*, Locked Bag 154, North Ryde NSW 1670** or email your entries to **pets@universalmagazines.com.au** Please read the terms and conditions on page 97 before entering. Good luck!

# pet NEWS

## CHOC-FULL OF TROUBLE

**It's no secret that chocolate is bad for dogs and cats. This is primarily due to an ingredient named theobromine, a compound which acts similarly to caffeine. If your pet accidentally consumes chocolate, the RSPCA warns you to look for signs of trouble that include:**

- restlessness
- excitement
- hyperactivity
- nervousness
- trembling
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- increased drinking and increased urination
- increased heart rate
- muscle tremors
- seizures.

If your pet does consume enough of the dreaded stuff, it can even die. If you suspect your pet has ingested some chocolate, the RSPCA recommends you call your vet for their advice and make sure you monitor your furry friend closely to make sure they're not showing signs of any of the above.

Not only do you need to watch out for your dog eating chocolate in the home, but also the garden. If you are hosting an Easter egg hunt, ensure you mark all the spaces where chocolate is hidden on a map, and then double check that not only is the chocolate removed from there, but that the amount of hidden eggs have been found. Better yet, hold the hunt somewhere your pet doesn't have access to, ensuring a safer day for all. For more great pet information, visit **kb.rspca.org.au**

Of course, just because they can't eat cocoa doesn't mean your pet won't feel loved this Easter. Why not give them an egg that won't cause them harm, like the Major Dog Snack Egg? This interactive treat toy is perfect for our little-pawed friends. Your dog can push and roll the Snack Egg around, resulting in dry kibble spilling out for your dog to enjoy. And the best part? They're exercising their mind while they eat — and we all know a tired dog is a well-behaved one.

For more information on the Major Dog Snack Egg, visit **majordog.com.au**. And for other great ways to show your pet you care this Easter, check out our feature on page 42.

## 5 FUN CAT FACTS

**Brought to by Snappy Tom**

**1.** Calico cats are nearly always female.
**2.** A cat can jump approximately seven times its height — whoa!
**3.** Cats' whiskers aren't just things of beauty — they help them navigate in lower light and detect objects.
**4.** A group of kittens is called a kindle, and a group of adult cats is called a clowder.
**5.** An adult cat has 30 teeth, and with those 30 adult teeth, our cats need to eat delicious and nutritious food that contains no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives, just like Snappy Tom.

# DOES YOUR DOG NEED AN EASTER TREAT HUNT?

**A message from Dr Marie Rowe**

Easter is such a wonderful opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends. It's a time of thankfulness and celebration and a time when we can often indulge in good food and drinks, including of course, chocolate. If, like me, you have a large family, it's likely you'll have a heap of chocolate around the house at this time of year.

You may even have chocolate hidden around the garden as well, ready for a traditional Easter Sunday egg hunt — which your dog should not be allowed anywhere near.

How about having an Easter "Treat Hunt" for your pets? Hide some of our delicious love'em treats around the house and garden and let them hunt them out for themselves. To help you do this, I have a free sample pack of beef liver treats available for you the first 100 dog lovers who email me at **thevet@love-em.com.au** and mention this article.

**FREE!** love'em samples for the first 100 readers.

Have a wonderful Easter that is full of joy and happiness.

**Dr Marie Rowe**

# EASTER TIPS FOR CATS

**Easter time brings lots of delicious treats, but remember that some of these can be harmful for your cat or kitten.**

The wrappers from Easter eggs with their bright, shiny colours might be appealing for your cat but could cause problems if ingested. Another one of your Easter-time favourites, hot cross buns, are full of sultanas and raisins, which are toxic for cats and can cause kidney damage, so please keep them out of your cat's reach.

A fun way to delight your cat this Easter is to plan an Easter egg hunt with a difference. Instead of hiding Easter eggs place some tasty cat treats around your house or garden. When the treats are all in place let your cat explore and watch as they sniff out all the yummy snacks. For some extra fun you could include some small toys such as jingle balls to put your cat in a playful mood.

Wishing you a very happy Easter from all the cats and people at Cat Protection Society. For more information, visit **catprotection.org.au**



EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

## 5 THINGS YOUR GUINEA PIG WANTS YOU TO KNOW

**In honour of our small animal special, our good friends at Oxbow Australia put together this checklist of five things your guinea pig wants you to know. So? Do you know all these cool cavy facts?**

1 I NEED lots of fresh grass hay! This should make up 75 per cent of my diet.

2 I'll live a lot longer if you don't feed me grains, corn and seeds. My body isn't designed to digest these.

3 My cage is my home. Please keep it clean, cool and safe from predators.

4 I must have Vitamin C every day in my food to stop me from getting sick with Scurvy.

5 As a social creature, I'm lonely if I don't have a same sex or de-sexed friend.

For more great nutrition advice, visit **oxbowaustralia.com**

## EXTRA EASTER DANGER

**As well as the danger of theobromine in chocolate, there are other sweet things that can cause your cat or dog problems this Easter.**

The sugar substitute xylitol is also highly toxic to pets and is found in lollies and gum as well as some baked goods. When ingested, it causes a drop in blood sugar, resulting in seizures and possible death. If you are hiding treats around the house this Easter, make sure pets are kept away in another room.

**Dr. Alex Hynes**
**Ambassador for Huskimo**
*"It's Treat Time" offers a tasty alternative treat for your dog this Easter, and is available at leading independent pet stores.* For more information, visit **allpet.com.au**

## SAY NO TO ANIMAL TESTING

Rabbits, like all animals, each have their own unique personality. Some are shy, others are curious and friendly. Some love being patted, others prefer their own company. But most rabbits are happiest when they are with other rabbits — just like we feel most at home amongst our family and friends.

Sadly, many rabbits have painful tests done to them for companies that make cleaning products and cosmetics. You can be a friend to rabbits by looking out for the 'Not tested on animals' logo on the back of shampoos, make-up, detergents and other products. Find out more at **unleashed.org.au/shop-cruelty-free**

## GIVE A REAL GIFT

**It's a fact: chocolate is delicious. But instead of giving this tasty but quickly devoured gift this festive season, why not give something that can change a pet's life?**

Give the gift of love this Easter with the Regular Giver program from AWLQ. By signing up to the Regular Giver program with the Animal Welfare League of Queensland, you can give the gift of life this festive season, for as little as $1.25 per week — less than a cup of coffee! All you need to do is sign up online or all (07) 5509 9045. Visit **awlqld.com.au** for more information.

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# TOP TIPS FOR RAISING THE PURR-FECT KITTEN

**Kitten season is still upon us. Adopting or purchasing a tiny new addition to your family is a big commitment — the oldest cat ever reached 36 years old, and with most cats reaching into their mid-teens at least, it's no longer a 10 year commitment — more like 15 years of worshiping your new master!**

Before purchasing a kitty, there are several things you should know going into this exciting new phase of your life. Dr Kim Kendall of The Chatswood Cat Palace, cat vet and feline behaviour expert of a hundred cat years, has some invaluable tips for new kitten owners.

## ACQUIRING YOUR KITTEN

The **#1 most important tip** when getting a new kitten: **buy two!**

If your household can realistically cope with having two kittens (under the age of six months) instead of one, your kitten will be a much happier, well-rounded adult cat. Getting another kitten from the same litter is medically easier; they won't be introducing any potentially new viruses or diseases to each other. However, finding two kittens of a roughly similar age from different litters is fine also. Choosing two females or a male and a female are the best options, especially if you're going with a very active breed such as a Burmese. Two male kittens can compete with each other for the same things, causing you and your family unnecessary behavioural problems.

## FEEDING

**Feed a high quality, balanced diet.** There are a lot of myths, speculations and allegations flying around about pet food at the moment, so finding an unbiased, educated opinion can be tricky. With the added incentive of a growing kitten, choosing the best possible diet for your kitten in these early stages of development is crucial.

Here are some simple guidelines to adhere to:

- Provide high quality dry food as the kittens' main source of food. Any kitten-range dried food with a specific protein source (such as chicken) written as the first ingredient on the list is a good start. The smaller the list of ingredients that you can't pronounce, the better!
- If using treats as a reward, use pieces of your cat's dried food to avoid any fussiness developing in the future. Cooked pieces of chicken can make an extra special treat!
- A teaspoon of raw, human-grade meat (kangaroo is excellent), or a raw chicken wing or neck is a great addition to their dried food to help clean your cat's teeth, provide fresh nutrients and exercise its hidden killer tiger instincts. Your cat will generally love it, until about six months old, when they may get bored and not bother. At 10 months old kittens can have more meat to chew in their diets (the bigger breeds have to wait till 15–18 months old).

## PLAY

**Ensure safe play, and consistent rules.** Kittens are programmed to pounce at least 30 times a day! Most young cats' behavioural problems stem from insufficient or inappropriate play and hunting instincts. Reducing aggression towards humans and installing appropriate consistent behaviour patterns in these early stages of learning is the best way to ensure the safety and happiness of everyone in your family for years to come.

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RSPCA

for all creatures great & small

**Frequent play, at the right times.** To avoid the inconvenient midnight play sessions with your toes or face, it's helpful to start a kind of play schedule, where you play with them frequently throughout the day, so they are sleepy in the evening. Giving them a brush or a calm cuddle before going to bed will help as well. If they do wake you in the middle of the night, simply ignore any and all attempts to interact with you, and they will eventually stop. However, the easiest answer to the midnight playtime disturbance is to get two kittens and lock them away from toes at night.

**Use the right toys.** Toys need to be the size and shape of a mouse, and to move at mouse speed (25cm per second). "Run and freeze" is another key to stimulating the play/hunt drive, and towing a toy on a string under a piece of newspaper gets a big reaction! A Da Bird toy is excellent, but stick to the mouse speed — if you move it too fast, they get bored with the inevitability of not being able to catch it. But be careful with laser pointers! They actually run the risk of making the cat addicted, because of the adrenaline rush of the chase, and never receiving the endorphin release of catching it. That creates one very anxious and irritable cat!

**Consistent rules.** Don't encourage play with hands, feet, or any other part of you. What they play with now, they will bite to the bone when they become an adult, and that can end up putting you (or any of your family) into hospital with blood poisoning. Encourage play that is feline-friendly instead of being driven by your own wishes. The target of their play attention should be directed away from their human playmate. If your kitten does attack any part of you and draw blood, you need to take preventative action. Over-dramatise the reaction: giving a hiss or high-pitched scream, quickly moving away from the kitten and ceasing any interaction will tell the kitten it has hurt its friend, and should be gentler next time. This is where having another kitten particularly helps, as they learn these rules of play early on from their litter mate or new best bud, and generally don't try to play aggressively with their human friends after they have learnt the ground rules from their furry friend. If you have a rule, stick to it! Consistently reinforcing the rules you apply will help to create a sense of security and stability for your kitten, minimising the possibility of becoming anxious and ensure the rules are well understood.

For more information on all things feline, visit **thecatpalace.com.au**

## FREE!

To celebrate the cats' birthday on March 1, Dr Kim from the Chatswood Cat Palace is offering a free health check of your new kitten! Or, if you can't make it to her Sydney location, you can have a free e-book copy of Cats Revealed, by Dr Kim herself. What a fabulous offer! To claim yours, email **manager@thecatpalace.com.au** today.

## 5 FUN DOG FACTS

**Brought to you by ZiwiPeak**

**1.** It is often said that one human year is equal to seven dog years, making your pooch age very quickly indeed.

**2.** Dogs sweat through glands in the pads of their feet. If it's a very hot day, try bringing out a bucket with some iced water to help your dog cool down more quickly.

**3.** Three dogs apparently survived the sinking of the Titanic (even though many humans did not).

**4.** Despite what you may have heard, it's untrue that a dog sees in black and white. It's believed they can see some colour, primarily blue, greenish-yellow and shades of grey.

**5.** Dogs are believed to have 1700 taste buds. While this is significantly smaller than a human's 9000, it's still enough to know when something's all natural and delicious, like ZiwiPeak from Bowhouse.

# BIRTHDAY FREEBIES

In celebration of

## INTERNATIONAL CAT's BIRTHDAY

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www.facebook.com/chatswoodcatpalace

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# roaring REVIEWS

## BOOKS

**Reviewer:** Lauren McKellar.

### CHARLIE

**Author:** Lisa Tenzin-Dolma
**Publisher:** Hubble & Hattie
**RRP:** $29.99
**Available:** Now, from all good bookstores

Sometimes, a story comes along that touches your heart very deeply. For me, *Charlie* was one such read. This relatively short book told the story of Charlie, a traumatised dog who was taken in on foster care by the author, Lisa, from Blind Dog Rescue. When Lisa took Charlie home, it became clear that this one-eyed dog had not had close contact with humans. When Charlie first was taken into Lisa's home, he stood for literally hours in the same spot in the hallway — and then eventually lay down, facing away from the family.

From this point forward, Lisa had a challenge on her hands, and what follows is a story of how this feralised animal became a valued and loving member of society.

There is so much to like about this book. Reading Lisa's diary-style entries, combined with her overall observations really make it easy to connect with the autobiographical story — by the end, I was just as happy as she seemed to be that Charlie had found some measure of trust of and happiness in life with a human.

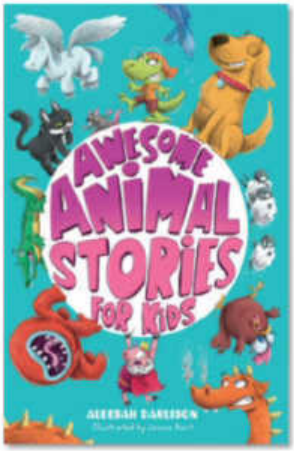
Overall, *Charlie* is a beautiful book that will leave you full of hope.

- = ZZZZZZ
- = NOT SO GOOD
- = GOOD
- = GRRREAT!
- = PAWTASTIC!!

**Reviewer:** Jeremy Nigro.

### AWESOME ANIMAL STORIES FOR KIDS

**Author:** Aleesah Darlison
**Illustrator:** James Hart
**Publisher:** Penguin Random House
**RRP:** $14.99
**Available:** Now, from all good bookstores




Award-winning Australian author Aleesah Darlison has written 12 enchanting animal stories that are handily collected in *Awesome Animal Stories For Kids*. The great thing about this collection is that each story is fun and interesting in a unique way, making this a real page-turner. Some of the stories are whimsically fantastical, such as *Pig-napped!* and *The Ivory Pony*, whilst *The Problem with Pets* and *Dino-Girl* entertainingly combine animals with wonderful sci-fi scenarios. These stories stand out in particular, with some of our other favourite stories being *Alvarado, King of Cats*, *Puff Returns* and *Go Away, You Crazy Dog!*

This is the perfect book to fly through on a long road trip or summer holiday, with James Hart's comedic illustrations helping the stories come to life. *Awesome Animal Stories For Kids* is a wonderfully written collection of stories, featuring a large range of animals in a multitude of wacky situations and settings.

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Doggone

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# furry FREEBIES

All you need to do is write the **name of the prize** and why you and your pet would love to win it (in **25 words or less**), along with your **name**, **address** and **contact number** on the BACK of an envelope. Send to **Furry Freebies/*PETS*, Locked Bag 154, North Ryde NSW 1670**. Or email your entries to **furryfreebies@universalmagazines.com.au** with the prize name as the subject heading. Entries close April, 2016. Please read the terms and conditions on page 79. Good luck!

## NATURE'S MIRACLE PET BLOCK REPELLENT SPRAY

There comes a time in every pet owner's life when you'll want to keep your pet away from something. Whether it's the new couch or perhaps a corner of your garden, keeping your cat or dog separate from this item can be tricky — and that's why we love Nature's Miracle Pet Block Repellent Spray. Made from natural repelling scents, this formula is designed to deter your dog or pup using scents he or she will inherently dislike or avoid. What a fabulous training aid! For more information, visit **natures-miracle.com.** ***PETS* has 10 Nature's Miracle Pet Block Repellent Spray to give away.**

## RAPHIE'S IMMUNITY PUPLIMENT POWDER

Give your pet the gift of good health with Raphie's Immunity Pupliment powder. Specially formulated with more than 20 essential vitamins and minerals, this product was produced with one aim in mind — to help improve the quality of your dog's immune system. Just one little scoop sprinkled on your pup's food every day is all you need. And the best part? Most dogs love the taste. And if yours doesn't? Simply mix it through their food — they won't suspect a thing. For more information, visit **raphies.com.au.** ***PETS* has a year's supply of Raphie's Immunity Pupliment powder (value up to $480 RRP) to give away.**

## PITTER PATTER PHOTOGRAPHY

They're members of our family, so it makes sense that you want to capture their image in photography, but getting a good quality image of your pet can be a hard task. Enter Lorraine Charlecrafte from Pitter Patter Photography. With a passion for all things on four legs, Lorraine is the purr-fect choice for those looking for someone to professionally capture their pet's image. With several awards under her belt, Lorraine is a strong choice for those looking to capture the perfect pet image this Easter. For more information, visit **pitterpatterphotos.com.au.** ***PETS* has three $400 luxury gift certificates to Pitter Patter Photography to give away, each comprising $250 towards a photography session with Pitter Patter Photography and $150 toward a purchase of photographic wall art.**

**NB:** The winner must make their own travel arrangements to Lorraine's Melbourne studios to claim the prize. This prize must be redeemed within three months of certificate issue.

# NATURE'S MIRACLE®

**Puppies make mistakes. We clean them up.**

## SOLUTION FINDER

### What's your problem?

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| URINE DESTROYER – INTENSE URINE STAIN & ODOR REMOVER | I need to remove a strong urine odour or stain |
| HOUSE BREAKING – POTTY TRAINING SPRAY | I need to toilet train my dog |
| OXY FORMULA – DUAL ACTION STAIN & ODOR REMOVER | I need to remove deep set stains |
| 3in1 ODOR DESTROYER – THE ULTIMATE PET ODOR ELIMINATOR | I need to neutralise pet odours |
| NO-CHEW – BITTER TASTE SPRAY | I need to stop unwanted chewing |
| PET BLOCK – REPELLENT SPRAY | For areas I don't want my pet to go |

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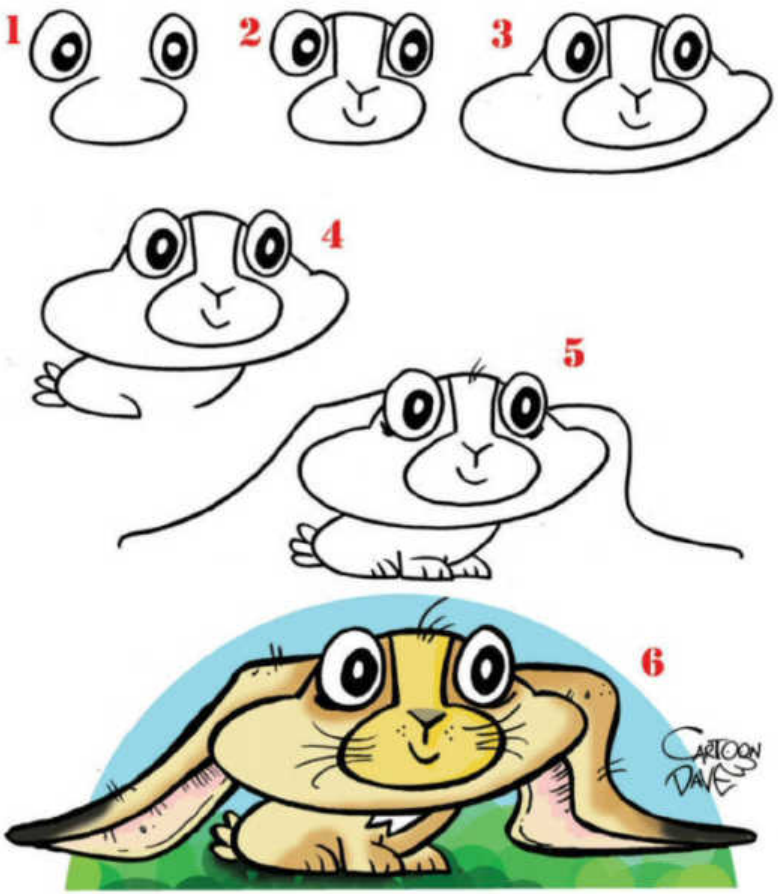

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This sport is similar to sheep herding — only the sheep are round, colourful and plastic!

# TREIBBALL

It's the newest sporting craze that your dog will go gaga for. **Carrol Baker** finds out more about Treibball and just what makes it so special.

**Calling all clever canines! There's a cool new sport for dogs that's making its mark in the dog world. And once you get your dog started on Treibball, they'll be sitting up begging for more.**

Treibball (pronounced Try-ball) is a lot of fun for dogs and their owners, and perhaps best of all, it's suitable for all breeds of dogs and for senior pets.

## ROUND 'EM UP!

Treibball is a skill-based sport that involves your dog moving a series of big colourful gym balls into a net or between goalposts, using their nose and shoulders to guide the ball. The balls (up to around 10 in number) are positioned in a triangle, a bit like a game of billiards. Once your happy hound pushes one, the others will scatter — but that's all part of the fun of the sport. And here's where communication between you and your best buddy comes to the fore. You pick the order in which the balls are pushed into the net or between the goalposts, and then your dog gets a treat as a reward.

Treibball Trainer Pam Child says the sport is a little bit like sheep herding. "You use hand signals and verbal commands to guide the dog, just as farmers do with their sheep," she says.

*Photos courtesy of Pam Child*

## A FUN SPORT

The sport of Treibball benefits both dogs and owners in a number of ways. It strengthens the bond between you, it's a wonderful opportunity to get outdoors and get active with your dog, and it's also loads of fun.

Pam's dog Jed, an Australian Kelpie, is crazy about Treibball. He attracts quite a crowd at his local park with Pam as he is rounding up all the balls. "He loves it; he gets so excited and has so much fun with it," she says.

The sport began in Germany just over 10 years ago after a farmer noticed his working dogs needed a fun way to burn up excess energy after they'd finished their day's work. As a sport, it's still evolving, and here in Australia it isn't yet recognised as a discipline — as agility training is, for example.

Pam's Jed loves manoeuvring the balls wherever she instructs.

## BACK TO BASICS

To take part in the sport, your dog will need to know and follow simple commands, and to be able to be off lead and not easily distracted. According to Pam it's important that your dog have discipline and basic training, otherwise your dog will just become frustrated, and may nip or try to chew the balls instead of pushing them.

To begin training your dog for Treibball, he needs to be able to do several things. Firstly, he needs to go where you ask on command. For this Pam suggests using a mat, and teaching your dog to go to the mat. "Then you might put a box in front of the mat so you teach your dog to go around the box and sit on the mat," explains Pam.

Your dog also needs to learn to touch the ball very gently, or it will be game over in seconds as the gym balls pop if they are bitten! To do this, begin by getting your dog to "touch" your hand gently, and then put a sticky note on your hand, and get the dog to touch it. "Then put sticky notes on other objects around the house, so your dog learns to touch them on command," suggests Pam. "Then move onto the next stage, put a little toy truck down and get the dog to touch it with its nose gently — it will roll along the ground." Only after your dog can gently move objects on command do you introduce the colourful gym balls.

Pam says over time your dog will improve their skills. "The dog will learn control — and you'll be able to send your dog out to stop behind any ball you nominate, and when you give a command like 'Over' he'll go to the next ball, or 'Back' and he'll go to another ball, then finally 'Push'," says Pam.

It's a sport that is both rewarding and challenging, and as your dog masters the basics different activities can be added — for example your dog might move balls through a tunnel or the distances may get longer.

"It really builds confidence, and helps your dog to learn control — having control of your dog is really what it is all about," says Pam.

## GET INTO THE GAME

To get your playful pooch involved in Treibball it's a good idea to take some lessons first so you and your dog can learn the basics. You can start when your puppy is six months old, suggests Pam.

There are numerous courses Australia wide on offer that you can join in. For more information, check out your local dog club.

There are so many fabulous places you can take your dog in Australia — and many beaches are a part of that!

# WHERE DOGS RULE

**Caroline Zambrano** compiles the Australian dog lovers destination guide, a list of some of the top dog-friendly spots in Australia.

**Dogs are the most popular family pet so it's no surprise that we want to take them wherever we go, whether it's on holiday or just a fun day out!**

In Nepal, there's a special day during the Hindu festival of Diwali devoted entirely to honouring dogs. It's the people's way of celebrating and thanking their canine friends for always being loyal and for supporting their human companions.

In Idaho, USA, you can stay at the Dog Bark Park Inn, a giant building shaped like a Beagle, complete with doggy-themed amenities, such as doggy pillows and doggy biscuits on arrival.

But you don't have to travel across the world to have your dog-loving fun. *PETS* magazine has put together some of the popular places of interest for dog lovers in Australia. Caroline Zambrano explores …

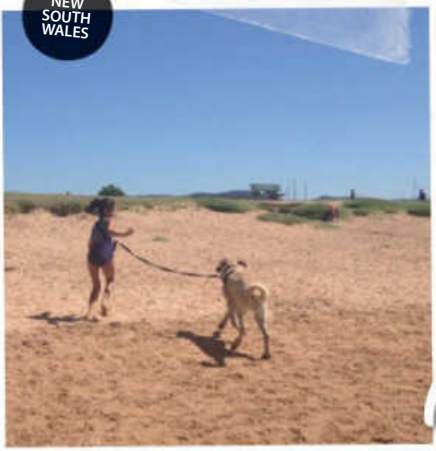
NEW SOUTH WALES

## NORTH COAST HOLIDAY PARKS JIMMYS BEACH, HAWKS NEST

Jimmys Beach Holiday Park offers dog-friendly camping grounds surrounded by diverse wildlife, vast sand dunes and rugged headlands, and only a couple minutes' walk from 50km of dazzling white beach. Dogs need to remain on lead at all times; however there is a designated off leash area! Jimmys Beach also provides warm dog baths free of charge to help get the sand off your pooch after fun at the beach!

For more information, visit **northcoastholidayparks.com.au/park/info/jimmys-beach** or phone 02 4997 0466.

NEW SOUTH WALES



Doggy beach at Roland Reserve, Bayview

## DOGGY BEACH AT ROLAND RESERVE, BAYVIEW

Roland Reserve (also known as Bayview Reserve) is one of the most popular dog-friendly beach areas in Sydney. There's plenty of sand and water, and a large flat-grassed area for dogs to run and play with furry friends. Plus, there's one-hour free parking and a coffee cart and mobile dog wash on the weekends.

For more information, visit **pittwater.nsw.gov.au**

VICTORIA

## BRIGHTON DOG BEACH, BRIGHTON

A half-hour drive south-east of Melbourne is Brighton Dog Beach, designed specifically for dogs — it even has its own Facebook page to post photos. The beach is popular for its purpose-built fenced-off section where dogs can run off-leash inside.

For more information, visit **bayside.vic.gov.au/living_in_bayside/brighton_beach_dog_off_leash_areas**

VICTORIA

## JOHANNA BEACH, GREAT OTWAY NATIONAL PARK

Located just off the Great Ocean Road in the Great Otway National Park, Johanna Beach welcomes dogs on the lead. Known for its excellent surfing, the beach area also offers an abundance of walking tracks and a large, open, grassy camping and picnicking area.

For more information, visit **parkweb.vic.gov.au/explore/parks/great-otway-national-park/things-to-do/johanna-beach2**

NEW SOUTH WALES

## CAFÉ BONES, LEICHHARDT (SYDNEY)

Claiming to be the world's first dog-friendly café, Café Bones is the ultimate destination for dogs and their owners to relax, enjoy a coffee (or Pupaccino), exercise and socialise. Established over 15 years ago, Café Bones is also home to a new range of gourmet dog biscuits and the world's first café-style dog beverage, the Pupaccino.

For more information, visit **cafebones.com.au** or phone 02 8086 2433.

Cornerstone & Co Café, Hampton

## CORNERSTONE AND CO CAFÉ, HAMPTON

VICTORIA

Melbourne's The Cornerstone & Co café offers a tasty menu and a great atmosphere for people and their pets to come together in a welcoming space. There is also a lovely courtyard at the rear of the building overlooking a park where you can take your dog.

For more information and location, visit **facebook.com/Cornerstoneandco** or phone 03 9521 6865.

## THYME CAFÉ, ADELAIDE

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Thyme Café is located on the Victoria Square in Adelaide, and welcomes dogs with open paws! Offering delicious modern Australian cuisine by an award-winning chef, the café atmosphere is enhanced by a gallery of paintings (on sale).

For more information or bookings, visit **thymecafe.com.au** or phone 08 8231 9093.

## LIPSON COVE, EYRE PENINSULA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Lipson Cove is a quiet, sandy bay located on the breathtaking Eyre Peninsula, not far from Tumby Bay. Besides being renowned for its spectacular views, Lipson Cove has dog-friendly camping grounds. It is also easy to access, offering a range of activities including swimming, fishing and boating.

For more information, visit **tumbybay.sa.gov.au**

## THE WRIGHT ROAD DOG PARK, CRAFERS (ADELAIDE)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Wright Road Dog Park is the only off-leash, fenced-off dog park in the Adelaide Hills. More importantly the park runs over two acres and includes a stream and running water to hydrate the dogs! Plus, there is a separate area for small dogs or puppies. The Park has tunnels and agility jumping and weaving equipment, as well as unique structures made from tree stumps. It even has its own Facebook page for visitors to post pictures of their dogs!

For more information, visit **www.ahc.sa.gov.au/Resident/pets-animals/dogs**

## O'SULLIVAN BEACH, ONKAPARINGA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

O'Sullivan Beach is located around 30km south of Adelaide and is well known for being dog-friendly — so much so that it's not surprising to find more dogs than humans there! There are some restrictions, however, such as being on a leash between certain hours during daylight savings months (October to March).

For more information, visit **onkaparingacity.com/custom/files/docs/osullivan_beach_precinct.pdf**

Café Central, Darwin

## CAFÉ CENTRAL, DARWIN

NORTHERN TERRITORY

You can find Cafe Central on a quiet residential street in the heart of beautiful Rapid Creek and a short walk from the splendid Casuarina foreshore and parklands. Rumoured to have the best coffee in Darwin, the café welcomes dogs of all shapes and sizes!

For more information, visit **cafecentraldarwin.com.au** or phone 08 8948 4465.

## WATERTANK CAFÉ, ALICE SPRINGS

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Watertank Café is one of the few cafes in Alice Springs where dogs are welcome. You can enjoy your meal and coffee whilst sitting with your dog under the shady mahogany trees! Plus there is free Wifi available if you feel the need to post a photo of you and your pooch online.

For more information, visit **facebook.com/WatertankCafe** or phone 08 8953 0655.

Flanagan Reserve, Barney View

## SHEOAK SHACK, TWEED HEADS

QUEENSLAND

Sheoak Shack is a relaxed dog-friendly café and art gallery located on the beautiful Fingal Beach in Tweed Heads. Besides great views, the café has live music and offers a variety of cuisines. It is a wonderful spot to enjoy breakfast or brunch after exercising your pooch on the nearby off-leash beach.

For more information, visit **sheoakshack.com/sheoakshack/Welcome.html**

## LONGREACH WATER HOLE, ELLIOTT

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Longreach Water Hole is a dog-friendly "bush camping" area that is part of the Lake Woods wetlands, halfway between Darwin and Alice Springs, and is an important conservation area. The camping ground does not have any facilities but is a birdwatchers' paradise! Each day also ends with a magnificent sunset over the peaceful waters.

For more information, visit **lrm.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/13902/39_lakewoods.pdf**

## FLANAGAN RESERVE, BARNEY VIEW

QUEENSLAND

Flanagan Reserve offers 12 hectares of bush camping in the Southern Scenic Rim, situated on the shady banks of the beautiful Logan River facing Mount Maroon. The camping grounds are dog-friendly — as long as your pooch is on a leash — and you can enjoy a variety of activities, such as swimming and fishing.

For more information, visit **flanaganreserve.com.au**

## SUNSHINE BEACH, NOOSA

QUEENSLAND

A popular spot for visitors to Noosa, Sunshine Beach (once known as Golden Beach) is known for its sand and surfing competitions with dogs! Many nearby cafes and restaurants also welcome pets. Dogs can freely explore the beach from Noosa National Park to the Seaview Terrace car park at any time.

For more information, visit **noosa.qld.gov.au/recreational-parks#Sunshine%20Beach**

## ATTICUS FINCH CAFE, BRISBANE

QUEENSLAND

Atticus Finch Café is a dog-friendly café in Paddington where you can enjoy a fine cup of coffee, delicious food and the company of your furry friend. The café also has a dog-friendly zone with a special deck hook for securing their leashes and a water bowl nearby.

For more information, visit **facebook.com/atticusfinchcafe** or phone 07 3367 2448.

## PEASHOLM BEACH, PERTH

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Famous for its gleaming white sand, Peasholm Beach (South of Brighton Beach) is long and wide with heaps of space for dogs to run around. The sand is clean and the water is clear without any rocks. Doggy drink facilities and showers with hoses are available on the beach for rinsing sand and salt off your pooch. A fabulous spot for a walk or swim with your dog in calm conditions. Beware — the beach is unpatrolled and huge waves break in shallow water close to shore.

For more information, visit **stirling.wa.gov.au/Recreation/Beaches/Pages/Explore-our-coastline.aspx**

## THE LANSDOWNE CRESCENT CAFÉ, HOBART

TASMANIA

The Lansdowne Crescent Café is a popular place for breakfast or lunch with a great menu, good coffee and only a short walk from the CBD. There is seating outside, and more importantly it is pet friendly.

For more information, visit **facebook.com/Thelansdownecrescentcafe**

## PET LOVERS CAFÉ, PERTH

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Pet Lovers Café in Maylands is a pet boutique and bakery, where you can take your dog to socialise and enjoy quality dog bakery treats. Don't worry, there are yummy foods for humans, too! The café also offers training services, daily play sessions and various dog-friendly events.

For more information, visit **petloverscafe.com.au**

Pet Lovers Café, Perth

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Phone: 08 9306 2767
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Mariginiup (Wanneroo), WA, 6078

TASMANIA

## OKINES BEACH, DODGES FERRY

Okines Beach is an unpatrolled beach with usually calm conditions at the shore, and a year-round, off-leash dog exercise area. The beach runs for 1km so don't forget the poo bags!

However, a section of Okines Beach does have "on-lead only" restrictions. For more information, visit **www.sorell.tas.gov.au/category/our-municipality/recreation/beaches**

Okines Beach, Dodges Ferry

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

## SILO BAKERY, CANBERRA

A lovely boutique bakery in Kingston, Silo Bakery offers delicious breakfasts, lunches, coffees, breads and a fabulous cheese room. Plus, it's dog-friendly! What more can you ask for when dining with your pooch?

For more information, visit **silobakery.com.au**

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Curtin Playing Fields Walk, Canberra

## CURTIN PLAYING FIELDS WALK, CANBERRA

A favourite walk amongst dog lovers, the Curtin Playing Fields Walk extends off-leash opportunities nearly the whole way. The route follows informal parks with many interesting smells, long grass for your pooch to run through, large fields to chase the ball on, and a creek dip to cool down.

For more information, visit **canberradogwalks.com.au/curtin-playing-fields-walk/**

TASMANIA

## LITTLE BEACH, CHAIN OF LAGOONS

Located in Lagoons Beach Conservation Area, Little Beach camping grounds sit between a long lagoon and a beautiful dog-friendly, white beach along the Little Beach State Reserve. You can swim, fish for salmon in the surf or have a quiet stroll with your pooch along the rocky shoreline.

For more information, visit **parks.tas.gov.au**

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

## EXHIBITION PARK, MITCHELL

Exhibition Park is home to hundreds of pet-friendly events each year and one of Canberra's most popular camping spots. In fact, the park boasts the only pet-friendly camping in the city!

For more information on events and camping with your dog, visit **exhibitionparkincanberra.com**

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Going for a walk can be a satisfying "treat" for your dog.

# TREAT TIME

We get to chow down on heaps of delicious chocolate eggs this Easter, so how can we find a fun and safe way to give our dogs a treat at the same time? **Tim Falk** looks at some fantastic ways to treat your pooch this Easter that don't involve chocolate.

**Along with Christmas, Easter is one of our favourite times of the year for one very important reason: we get to stuff our faces with delicious chocolate Easter eggs. But what about your dog — is he or she allowed to tuck into a chocolate feast at this time of year? The answer, explains Dr Eloise Bright, a vet from** lovethatpet.com**, is a very big *NO*.**

"Chocolate contains theobromide, which is in a similar class of compounds to caffeine. It is poisonous to dogs in high amounts and is contained variably in different types of chocolate," Dr Eloise explains.

Dark chocolate or baking chocolate contains more of this nasty chemical than milk chocolate, and it can cause serious health problems for your pooch if they get into your stash of Easter eggs. "At the lower end of the dose range vomiting and diarrhoea occur," Dr Eloise says. "Higher doses stimulate an increased heart rate and cardiac arrhythmias, with the large doses causing seizures, coma and death."

All of that sounds pretty scary and unpleasant, so it's important to make sure you

Photos: Big Stock Photo

don't give your dog any chocolate at Easter or any other time. But if chocolate is off the menu, how can you treat your dog so that he or she loves Easter just as much as you do?

## A HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE

Just because you're treating your dog at Easter doesn't mean you can't give him something nice and healthy. "There is really no need to give your pet rich, fatty, sweet human foods," Dr Eloise says.

"Dogs in particular have much fewer taste buds than we do, as evidenced by the fact they will regularly eat possum poo and all sorts of disgusting things. Many dogs will eat a piece of carrot as a treat and there are many healthy treats available for them."

But choosing store-bought treats can be difficult at times, as not only are you spoilt for choice but the labels on treats can be pretty confusing. "Ideally stay away from the packets with numerous numbers, lots of salt and ingredients that don't look like food items," Dr Eloise says. "Liver treats are great and you can even make your own tasty Easter treats if you want to cook for your pet."

## FORGET FOOD

We all love pigging out sometimes, but spoiling your dog at Easter doesn't even need to involve food at all. In fact, you can have hours of fun and treat your pooch without filling his tummy.

"For many pets, play and attention is much more fun than food, so find out what your pet enjoys and take the emphasis off food as a way to interact. It's much better for the waistline," Dr Eloise says.

If your pooch has a favourite toy, why not spend half an hour letting her play with it? Alternatively, try training your dog to do a fun new trick, such as playing dead or rolling over — not only will this give you plenty of one-on-one time and mental stimulation for your pooch, but you can reward her with play time or a tasty treat to encourage her to learn.

### DIY DOGGY TREATS

Do you want to bake up a delicious, healthy treat for your pooch this Easter? Check out the Love That Pet biscuit recipe at **lovethatpet.com/blog/tasty-easter-treats-furry-family/**

**Many dogs love going for a road trip — why not use this as an Easter treat for your pet?**

It's also worth remembering that every dog needs exercise, some more than others, so often getting your dog's heart rate up is the best way to treat him at Easter. Go for a long walk on the beach or let him run free at your local off-leash park — he'll love it and all that exercise will only be good for his health.

## ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

There are heaps more ways you can treat your pooch this Easter. We don't have enough space to list them all here, but here are some of our favourites:

**Take a road trip**

Pack the family into the car and hit the wide, open road. You could swing down to the local shops, head off for a weekend getaway or maybe go even further. Australia is a huge country with heaps to see, and your dog will love the feeling of the wind in her fur as she explores it all with you.

**Try a doggy sport**

If you've got an active pooch, why not give a doggy sport a try? Agility, flyball, treibball and more — there's heaps to choose from — so see if there are any clubs in your area running these canine sports. Not only do dog sports provide a great workout for your pooch's mind and body, but they're great fun to watch as well.

**Doggy daycare**

As much as your dog loves your company, sometimes there's nothing she enjoys more than spending time with some of her own kind. Dogs are social animals and most canines will love the opportunity to meet other dogs and sniff, lick, run, jump and play together. Your local dog park is a great spot for this, as is a doggy daycare centre. Treat your dog to a couple of hours of social time and they'll love you for it.

**Shopping spree**

Has your dog chewed his bed to bits? Are all his toys looking a bit crusty and gross? Why not go shopping and buy your canine companion a present, just as you would at Christmas? You could get him a new toy, new bedding, a personalised collar or even a custom-made doggy hamper packed with treats and other surprises. Just remember: you don't have to spend the Earth to please your pooch.

**Scratch that itch**

In his later years, my old Labrador Max used to love belly rubs. At just about every opportunity he would be reclining on his back practically begging for a scratch on the belly, and the look on his face when you gave him what he wanted was one of pure delight. So if you want to treat your dog at Easter, give him an extra-long helping of the thing he loves the most — it could be a belly rub, a scratch on the back, a gentle pat behind the ears or even a massage. It might sound like a simple thing to do but it's a great way to make this Easter one your pooch will never forget.

## CATS AND CHOCOLATE?

There's a lot of talk about dogs not being able to eat chocolate, but rarely do people mention cats. Does that mean this substance is safe for our feline friends? The answer to this question is most definitely not. Just like with your pet dog, keep your kitty away from the Kit Kats this Easter.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG EATS CHOCOLATE

"The most important thing to do if the chocolate has just been consumed is to get your pet to the vet to induce vomiting," Dr Eloise says. "The quicker this is done the better. Usually if vomiting is induced within an hour, the problem is solved and there is no need for hospitalisation, fluids, seizure control and expensive vet bills."

But inducing vomiting at home can be pretty dangerous, so leave it to you local emergency vet to sort out. If you are a long way from a vet, ring an emergency vet clinic and ask for advice over the phone. "If you are not sure how much or when the chocolate was consumed, see your vet too for early treatment," Dr Eloise says. "Don't wait and see, as by the time your pet seizures it is often much more difficult to save them."

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# AWLQ Party Animals!

"Birthday parties for kids who truly love animals"

Hey kids! Do you really love animals? Do you want to do something a little different for your birthday this year? Then why not have your next party at the Animal Welfare League Qld on the Gold Coast?

You will have a birthday to remember, cuddling with some of our special shelter animals, playing animal-themed games and doing animal-themed craft activities with your party guests!

The best thing about our parties, is that you will be helping to support the work of AWLQ, who care for over 10 000 homeless and abandoned animals in South East Qld each year!

Party Animals is ideal for for kids between the ages of 5 - 12 years old and we will tailor your party to your needs, making sure you and your guests have the best time possible.

**This is what we provide:**

- Choice of party invitation designs
- Set-up and animal-themed decorations
- AWLQ 'Party Host'
- An animal-themed craft activity
- Guided 'behind-the-scenes' shelter tour
- Presentation and hands-on interaction with Education animals
- Choice of 'party area' spaces (either indoor and air-conditioned or outdoors and shaded)
- AWLQ 'Take-home' party bags with AWLQ goodies

**This is all you need to provide:**

- The food (incl. cake) and drinks
- Clean up

**COST: $300**

**[Includes provisions for up to 10 guests]**

**$11 extra per additional guest**

**All proceeds go directly to helping animals in need at the AWLQ!**

awlqld.com.au

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For a comprehensive guide to the educational and craft activities and games we offer as part of our parties please see our **'Party Animals Guide'** available to download from awlqld.com.au/Education

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TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND

# PETS

TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND
PETS

*Muscovy duckling*
*Photo: Big Stock Photo*

*Lop rabbit*
*Photo: Big Stock Photo*

TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND

# PETS

TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND

# PETS

*Chihuahua*
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TAKING CARE OF YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND

# PETS

*Chihuahua*
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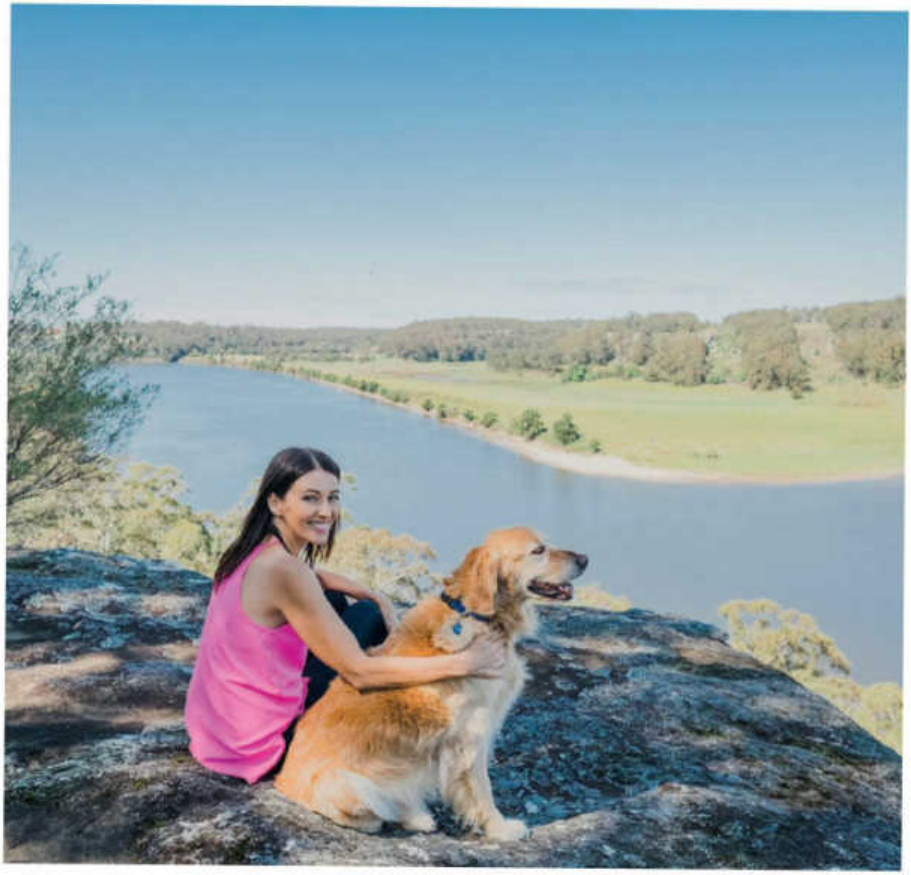

Dr Katrina and her dog Riley at The Grotto, North Nowra.

# HITTING THE ROAD

Easter is a time when many pet-lovers hit the road with their four-legged friends. **Dr Katrina Warren** offers her best tips for a happy and safe doggy holiday.

*Photo courtesy of Dr Katrina Warren*

**Easter is a great opportunity for you and your family to take a trip with your pet dog. The weather tends to be a little cooler than summer, so there's less chance of heat stress, but it's still warm enough to be able to enjoy getting out and about with your four-legged friend in a new location.**

Before you hit the road, however, there are a few things you must do to help ensure your trip is a safe and happy one.

- Schedule a visit to your vet a couple of weeks prior to departure to make sure your pet is up to date with worming, vaccinations, flea and tick prevention.
- Make sure that your dog's microchip details are up to date with your current contact details. I recommend all dogs also wear an ID tag with your mobile number and the contact number of the place you are staying.

If you are travelling to areas on the East Coast of Australia, paralysis ticks can be a huge problem and you should start preventative treatment a couple of weeks prior to travel — speak with your vet about the best option for your dog.

If your dog isn't used to travelling in the car, take a few shorter trips around your local area to help familiarise him with the process. This will hopefully result in an animal that remains calm and relaxed when you're in it for the long(er) haul.

Finally, it's important to always keep your pet safe when you travel. *PETS* recommends using a proper harness or pet seatbelt to help keep your dog safe in the unfortunate event of an accident.

## HOW TO CHOOSE A DESTINATION THAT IS DOG-FRIENDLY

These days there are many websites and apps designed specifically to help dog owners find places around the country that will welcome their four-legged friends.

I am a huge fan of the Shoalhaven region, on the South Coast of NSW, and have spent many long weekends there with my dogs. The area is well known for its many off-leash dog parks and beaches, dog friendly cafés and beautiful walks that allow dogs.

**It is important to note that dogs are not allowed in Australia's national parks.**

## ON ARRIVAL

Be sure to keep your dog on a lead while you explore your new environment. Offer your dog a toilet opportunity and have water readily available, as many dogs get very thirsty during travel. Take a walk around the new area to help familiarise your dog with the place.

## WHAT TO PACK

- ✔ Your pet's bedding
- ✔ A couple of your dog's favourite toys
- ✔ A lead plus a spare
- ✔ Shampoo and brush
- ✔ Portable water bowl
- ✔ A couple of towels — even if your dog won't be swimming, towels are very handy for wet and muddy paws
- ✔ Food — pack your dog's regular food as you may not be able to get your food at the destination and a sudden change in diet can cause tummy upsets
- ✔ Tick prevention, if you are travelling to a paralysis tick area — if you are unsure, phone a vet clinic at your holiday destination and ask
- ✔ Dog waste bags — if you're taking your dog to a new area, chances are you'll take your four-legged friend exploring, and that means you'll need to pick up after him, too, so make sure you have lots of bags to clean up any doggy mess.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

on one of Dr Katrina's favourite doggy travel spots, visit **shoalhaven.com.au**

# PART-TIME POOCH

Sharon came up with this concept when she first started borrowing dogs back in 2006.

Is your pooch suffering from a little bit of neglect when you head out for work every day? Maybe you should look into Borrow My Pooch, a website matching those looking for some canine companionship with a whole heap of dogs. **Lauren McKellar** speaks to company founder **Sharon Sanders** and program participant **Anne Robinson**.

Photo: PawPals Photography (pawpalsphotography.com.au)

**PETS:** How did you come up with the concept for Borrow My Pooch?

**SHARON SANDERS:** I have been borrowing other people's dogs since 2006, when I first started borrowing Hobbs, a beautiful Red Heeler cattle dog. On the days that I worked from home I would go and "dognap" her from my friend's house and she'd keep me company while I worked. I then started to look after a couple of cute Schnoodles, who came with a beautiful house overlooking the beach and ocean. There's been a Shih Tzu and a couple of Schnauzers in between.

Living in an apartment and working full-time meant that I couldn't own my own dog, so borrowing other people's dogs opened up the wonderful world of doggy joy to me. I thought that there must be plenty of others in my situation and also plenty of dogs home alone all day while their owners are out at work.

It's a win–win for all parties concerned: the borrowers get their doggy fix; the owners feel less guilty about leaving their pooch either alone or in doggy day-care while they're away; and the dogs get all the love, attention and walks that they could wish for.

**PETS:** How do you match the perfect pet with the enthusiastic borrower?

**SHARON:** Our website matches borrowers and owners based on their location. Both types of members can broaden their matches by applying a distance filter to expand the radius from their location. We will also be introducing another filter in the near future whereby members can filter according to their availability and thus just show matches that have the same availability as they do.

**PETS:** What is the initial meet and greet process like for borrower and owner?

**ANNE ROBINSON:** I found the initial meet and greet a bit nerve-racking, but basically if you are a dog person you should be okay. I liked Bonnie straight away, even though she was obviously very focused on Erin. Fortunately, Bonnie was friendly with me also when we met. Another pair of dogs I met were really afraid of anyone except their owners — that was a bit uncomfortable. I decided, as a borrower, that people with dogs needed to come to my home. They needed to know where their dog would be, and that I was a real person, close to their location, who loves dogs. So each time I am approached, I invite the dog and owner to come to me.

**PETS:** Do you have any recommended tips for owners and borrowers alike to consider when they meet up for the first time?

**ANNE:** I realised that I needed to consider dog size (I have bad arthritis, so larger, not very disciplined dogs are difficult for me to manage). I love all dogs, so it was a surprise to me that I felt size was really important after meeting a couple of really big, troubled dogs! Also, trust is very important — I didn't try to force anything and just asked whether they would like to come over and meet me, see my yard and have a chat. Then I just let people make up their mind about me!

**PETS:** How safe is the Borrow My Pooch process?

**SHARON:** We encourage all owners to meet up with their selected borrower (or borrowers) as many times as they need to until they (and their pooch) feel comfortable with leaving their dog in the borrower's care. If the owner has any doubt about his or her borrower, then there is no obligation for them to continue with the arrangement. It is important that everyone is happy and comfortable with each other and a trusting relationship is established. We also suggest that the owners visit the borrower's home if the dog is going to spend any amount of time there.

In addition, we verify every member who subscribes to the service. Currently this is a two-step process whereby their email is verified and also their identity. Based on customer feedback, we will be streamlining this process in the near future.

# NAUGHTY OR nice

Animal behaviourist Kate Mornement with her canine pals Archie the Boxer and Joseph the Labrador.

Brett Richardson, Glamour Pets Photography

Do you have a badly behaved budgie or a misbehaving mutt? Animal behaviourist **Kate Mornement** shares some handy hints to help get common pet behaviour blunders under control.

**Sometimes, we miss a dog's body language signals — until they're all too obvious.**

## BITE BACK

**Q: Hi *PETS*, my Chihuahua cross is a bit bitey with my kids. How can I prevent this from happening?**
**Denise, via Facebook**

A: Hello Denise, dogs use their body language to communicate with us and will display quite a few more subtle behaviours before they resort to biting and aggression. Unfortunately, people and especially kids are not very good at reading their dog's body language and we often miss these earlier signals. Dogs then learn that the more obvious signals are the ones that work and so they continue to use them.

Aggression is used either to create distance between the dog and a perceived threat or to gain or maintain access to something desirable (such as food, favourite resting place or attention). Dogs may also become excitable and mouth and bite as a result.

You can prevent your dog from being bitey with your children by teaching your children to be calm and gentle with your dog and to allow your dog to make the choice of whether it wants to interact with them or not. Sometimes kids can be rough and it's important you provide your dog with a safe place where it can escape for a break if it wants. Aggression can be a serious problem and I encourage you to seek professional help from a qualified behaviourist to assess the situation and provide you with a plan to address it. Good luck!

*Photos: Big Stock Photo*

# TAIL TROUBLES

**Q: Hi *PETS*, my Siamese cats suck each others' tails. I'm sure it's a comfort thing, but I really dislike it. Any tips?**
**Narelle, via Facebook**

A: Hi Narelle, it sounds like your cats may be engaging in a behaviour known as "pica". Often called wool-sucking, pica is the collective name for the behaviour of eating or sucking on wool, blankets and other non-food items. It's quite common in Siamese and other oriental breeds and is therefore thought to have a genetic link. Pica is classified as an obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) which may be triggered by stress and anxiety. The behaviour is comforting because it provides an outlet and helps to reduce stress and is therefore repeated. It's also believed that sucking on objects, such as another cat's tail, may be related to a lack of proper weaning as kittens — however this has not yet been proven.

Pica can be a complex issue and you should seek professional help to ensure it doesn't worsen. In most cases, a combination of stress-reducing medication, behaviour therapy and environmental enrichment is recommended; however this is determined on a case-by-case basis. Giving the cats appropriate items to chew and suck on and distracting them with a game or other activity when they do lick each others' tails may help.

## WRITE TO KATE

Does your puppy pee in all the wrong places? Does your kitty scratch the new couches? If you have a question about your pet's behaviour, write to our resident animal behaviourist, Kate Mornement, from Pets Behaving Badly (**petsbehavingbadly.com.au**). Send your question to **Naughty or nice/*PETS*, Locked Bag 154, North Ryde NSW 1670** or email your question to **pets@universalmagazines.com.au** with the subject heading "Naughty or nice". Stay tuned, as your question may be answered by Kate and published in the magazine.

Most cats love high-up places where they can safely retreat.

# CAT CURIOSITY

**Q: Hi *PETS*, recently I've moved into a share house and there is one room in there that my Devon Rex, Roxie, is not allowed to go in (because the guy hates cats). However, without fail, this is the room she goes in the most frequently. Aside from just him shutting his door (which he often forgets to do) do you have any tips on how to keep the cat to certain areas of the house?**
**Mitch, via email**

A: Hey Mitch, Devon Rexes are beautiful cats! Isn't it funny how cats seem to gravitate to people who don't like them? For some reason, Roxie prefers to spend time in your housemate's room. Perhaps it's quiet, warm or interesting in some way. You can help reduce the likelihood of Roxie going into his room by increasing the appeal of other areas of the house. Cats love high up and cosy spaces. Providing her with shelving or a tall cat tower with a comfy bed in another area of the house might be enough to tempt her away. Additional rewards for being in other locations, such as favourite toys and treats, can also help Roxie associate other areas of the house with positive things and make it more likely that she will choose to stay there. Also, try to avoid anything that may be deterring her from spending time in the rest of the house, such as loud music.

Finally, make sure you housemate isn't rewarding Roxie for going into his room by giving her pats or attention or playing with her. Sometimes people say they hate cats when really they don't mind them.

# KONG® TIME

WITH DR KATRINA WARREN

PART 1

**Dr Katrina Warren** offers up her best tips for settling in a rescue dog.

**Pet adoption rates across Australia have been steadily increasing over recent years thanks to increased promotion and community awareness.**

There are many benefits to adopting a more mature dog. Not starting from scratch helps avoid much of the craziness and mess associated with puppies. And what you see is what you get: the dog's personality and size should be apparent, so there are no surprises.

Just because a dog is available for adoption doesn't mean they automatically have problems. Many rescue dogs are well trained and well behaved. However, some may exhibit unruly behaviour simply due to a lack of training, but these problems can generally be resolved with good management and consistent training.

## Set your rescue dog up for success

Be prepared for it to take several weeks before your new companion feels at home. If possible take a few days off work when the dog first arrives, so they have company and can be supervised and managed in the early stages.

Following are some simple tips to help rescue dogs settle in to their new environment.

**Routine:** Dogs like routine; it helps them feel secure. If they're not allowed on the furniture, then keep them off the furniture right from the start. You must be consistent.

When you leave the house, always offer your dog something to keep them occupied while you are gone — this helps them to be comfortable spending time on their own. A KONG Classic stuffed with food like treats and kibble is a great place to start. If your dog is speedy at getting the food out, you can stuff it with wet food and freeze it overnight.

If your dog isn't allowed on the couch, make sure you're consistent with this rule.

**Rewards:** To build confidence, use food rewards. Instead of putting down a bowl full of food to eat in one go, use your dog's daily ration of food for training. Each time you call your dog to do something, reward them for doing so. When they do any desired behaviour, like lying quietly, offer a food reward.

Any remaining food from the daily ration can be placed in a food dispensing toy such as a KONG Genius. The stimulation from learning how to get the food out will be beneficial in an overall way.

## To be continued ...

Keep your eyes out for *PETS* 54 where Dr Katrina shares more of her fabulous rehoming tips.

For more information, visit **kongcompany.com**

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# SAY cheese

We loved Jane's gorgeous Chihuahuas! As you can see, we had a lot of fun preparing this issue's magazine cover.

Things to do, people to see …

Chihuahua-oke.

Feel like a treat? Something sweet?

"Hey. You over there. Be sun smart."

"I'm a-gonna whack this ball so good!"

Photos: Animax Photography (animaxphotography.com)

"The ball is mine."

Reverse vampire face achievement — unlocked.

"He loves me … he loves me not … Which petal do I start from?"

When you just can't hold your own head.

"Seriously? Another photo?"

ChiChi never was very good at hide-'n'-seek …

"I am royally tired."

Once again, a huge thank you goes to the lovely Jane at Fureverchi Chihuahuas for letting us play with her cute little ones for this photo shoot. For more information on her gorgeous pups, check out her Facebook page at **facebook.com/Fureverchi-Chihuahuas-127166020737903** or send her an email at **fureverchi@gmail.com**

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# creature FEATURES

## LOOKING FOR A NEW PET BUT NOT SURE WHAT TO GET?

Whether you're after something furry, fuzzy, slippery, scaly or slimy, *PETS* takes the hard work out of choosing your new family member.

**Keep an eye out for our "At a glance" boxes, where we rate the care and maintenance, grooming and exercise requirements of different breeds and creatures on a scale from one to five:**

- Low maintenance
- Moderate maintenance
- Requires regular attention
- Lots of work
- High maintenance

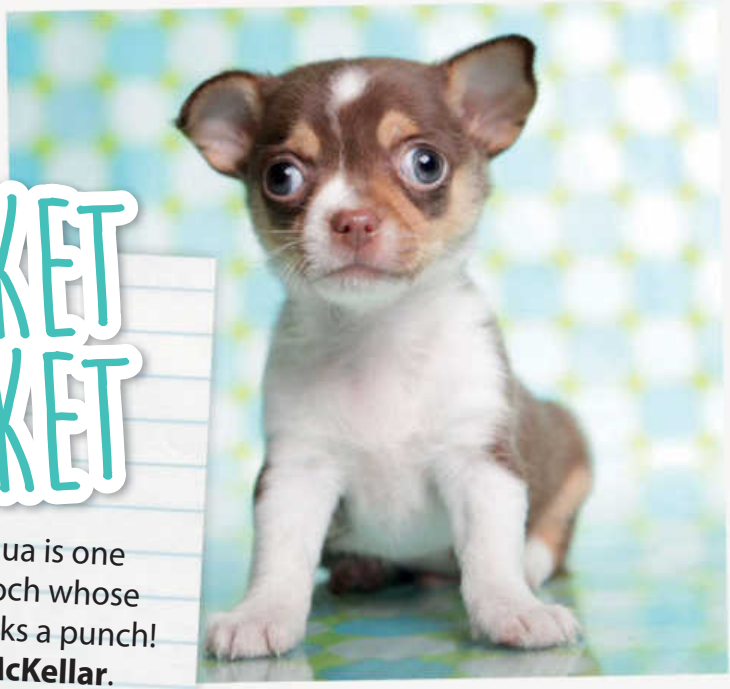
## KIDS AND PETS

Most of the critters we feature are family-friendly, though it's important to remember children should be supervised when playing with any animal whether it's a dog, cat, bird, bunny or reptile.

Big Stock Photo, Animax Photography (animaxphotography.com)

# POCKET ROCKET

The Chihuahua is one pint-sized pooch whose personality packs a punch! By **Lauren McKellar**.



They may be pint-sized, but they sure are pretty!

**The Chihuahua is one of the world's instantly recognisable dog breeds. This pint-sized pretty is not only synonymous with Mexican food, thanks to the huge success of the Taco Bell advertising campaign, but is also known as somewhat of a 'handbag dog', thanks to a slew of young, good-looking celebrities taking their pet Chihuahuas along with them everywhere via a Louis Vutton. This breed, however, is so much more than just a canine with Hollywood aspirations.**

The Chihuahua originated in Mexico, with the name coming from the Mexican state of Chihuahua where late 19th century American tourists first encountered these cute little canines. This breed is well-known for its sassy and alert personality that is just far too easy to fall in love with, a fact Jane Geftlick from Fureverchi Chihuahuas knows all too well. "I've loved the breed all my life," Jane says. Jane has been breeding Chihuahuas for more than nine years, and really does have a passion for this pint-sized pooch.

## NOT JUST GOOD LOOKS

This small dog has the ideal weight of between 1.8 and 2.7kg, according to the Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC), and come in between 15 and 25cm tall. This lovely breed comes in two distinct types — the long coat and smooth coat, which both appear very much as described. This beautiful coat can come in a wide variety of colours, with the ANKC specifying they should never be a merle or dapple.

Appearance isn't the only thing this sweet little toy group dog is known for. Chihuahuas are vivacious and lively animals, with personalities somewhat bigger than their small stature. It's for this reason that socialisation is required at a young age to

*Photo: Animax Photography (animaxphotography.com)*

you end up with a well-behaved dog that gets on well not only with other animals, but that also connects well with new humans, too.

"Getting them used to children and people all the way through to the elderly is very important," Jane says. All her pups are brought up in a household of six children, aged from two through to 19 years of age, ensuring they come to their new pet parents with a good deal of life experience already.

Because of this, Jane truly believes Chihuahuas can be suited to anyone – whether you have a large family or are an older person — so long as you socialise and train your pet correctly. *PETS*, of course, does not recommend you leave your child with any dog unsupervised, and in particular the Chihuahua, in case your young person is too rough with this toy-sized dog's small body.

Being such a small dog, the Chihuahua doesn't require a huge yard to run around in — in fact, this breed can make a great apartment pet, as long as there's a securely-fenced courtyard or similar for them to stretch those little legs in. "The Chihuahua isn't an outdoor dog," Jane says, stressing the importance of this pet being a part of the family and let indoors to socialise with its owners. This is also to prevent attacks from birds of prey.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Chihuahua isn't a particularly high maintenance dog to care for. When it comes to exercise, they do need their daily dose — after all, these little pooches sure do have a lot of energy. "They love exercise and they need some of it daily," Jane says. A short walk will keep them fit and also give them a chance to explore the local area — although make sure you don't do it in the heat of a summer's day, to avoid heatstroke and hypoglycaemia, which is a very common illness suffered in small animals exposed to extreme heats. A great way to help prevent hypoglycaemia on hot days even when your Chi is just running around the house or yard is by adding a little sugar to their water to help keep their sugar levels up.

Just as they can be prone to feeling extreme heat, Chihuahuas can feel the cold easily too. Invest in a warm jacket for your pet to ensure they don't get too cold during the winter months.

A regular training regime will keep your Chihuahua's mind alert, making the dog less likely to become bored and destructive. This will also help ensure your pet doesn't end up with 'little dog syndrome'. "Don't baby your Chihuahua," Jane says. "If a German Shepherd jumped up on you, you would correct him — you should do the same for your smaller pet."

When it comes to diet, these tiny animals don't require much food, but the food they should be given needs to be high quality. "It might cost you more, but this will save you problems in the long run by preventing issues caused by bad food," Jane says.

Grooming is fairly easy for the Chihuahua owner. "Short coats only need to be brushed or wiped over with a damp cloth occasionally," Jane says. "However, if your Chihuahua is a long coat, you'll need to brush her daily and take care to watch for mats in the hair."

When it comes to health, Chihuahuas are quite a hardy breed, with the average life expectancy of this dog between 15 and 22 years. "Some live as long as 25 years," Jane says, highlighting the importance of choosing your Chihuahua a forever pet.

This breed can be prone to eye injuries or infections due to their protruding eyes, and a collapsed trachea is a concern also characteristic of the breed. "Chihuahuas are also known for a genetic condition called 'luxating patella,'" Jane says, describing a condition that can see a dog's patella slipping sideways and causing the leg to lock up.

*PETS* recommends purchasing your Chihuahua from a reputable registered breeder and asking about health conditions of the pup and parents upfront. P

### AT A GLANCE

**Grooming:**
**Exercise:**
**Size:** Small

For more information on the Chihuahua or to contact a local breed club, visit your state canine council website via **ankc.org.au** New Zealand readers can visit **nzkc.org.nz** for information.

Dalmatian pups are very lively and full of fun.

# THE DARLING DALMATIAN

A protective and highly intelligent breed, the Dalmatian's elegance can be "spotted" a mile away. By **Lucy Arblaster**.

**One of the most distinctive breeds of dog, the Dalmatian is unmistakable and its endearing nature makes it even harder to forget. Elegant, humorous, active and intelligent, the Dalmatian is a highly sociable dog with a clown-like personality and a craving for companionship.**

The Dalmatian is believed to have originated in the eastern Mediterranean, spreading to India and then across Europe. The breed became known for accompanying carriages and clearing the road of stray animals, a job that required great strength, stamina and endurance. Boasting protective qualities, Dalmatians also served as guard dogs, war dogs, faithful companions, coach dogs and mascots for horse-drawn fire engines.

As its history suggests, the Dalmatian will run with horses for long distances. This is something it has a natural affinity for, not to mention the apparent calming effect the dogs have on horses. The Dalmatian is considered somewhat of a guardian angel.

## REGULAR EXERCISE

With distinctive black or liver spots, the Dalmatian is a unique breed and an active one at that. It will need a daily walk, run or game of ball, and a big backyard to run around in. Leaving this breed alone in a backyard for extended periods of time will result in boredom, leading to destructive behaviour such as barking or digging.

This is not to say Dalmatians cannot be left alone while owners are at work, but they need to be stimulated with regular exercise, toys and, most importantly, social interaction with people and other dogs. They thrive on love and attention and simply enjoy being part of the family.

A highly intelligent breed, the Dalmatian can have a mind of its own at times. The breed is well suited to older children, but remember, if you are looking for a dog for smaller kids, Dalmatian puppies can be rather boisterous and grow quite quickly, so they can be intimidating to little people.

In line with the uniqueness of this breed, the Dalmatian is known for its smile. A curl of the lip and baring of teeth can be confused with a snarl, but it is just their way of smiling and is usually a sign of affection or submission if they happen to be in trouble — after all, how can you be angry at a grinning dog?

## MINIMAL GROOMING

This breed requires minimal maintenance in terms

Photo: Big Stock Photo

of grooming and bathing. A quick brush once a day will keep its short, dense coat in good condition, and will also keep shedding to a minimum. However, if the presence of small white hairs around the house or on dark clothing would slowly send you mad, then perhaps the Dalmatian is not for you.

## BOUNDLESS ENERGY

Another reason the Dalmatian may not be suitable for everyone is the breed's endless amount of energy. If they are not given the chance to expend this energy they can become destructive, but if you have the time to share with this breed and it's a companion you're after, the Dalmatian is the dog for you and you truly will have a friend for life.

Dalmatian breeder Deborah Harbin of NSW has been involved with the breed for more than 20 years, and was initially attracted to it because she had horses and wanted a dog that would run with them.

Deborah says Dalmatians are very affectionate and people-oriented. It is an active, playful dog and simply loves the water and open spaces. They do well on properties, but are equally at home with city-dwelling families who will include them in their activities. She stresses that this breed does not cope well being put in a backyard and ignored.

"They are very easy to train and respond well to positive food training. They can be excellent at obedience and agility," Deborah explains.

Dalmatians are very sociable dogs and aggression just isn't in their nature, Deborah says. Their tails are quite strong and wag a lot, so sometimes this can be off-putting for small children who are not used to dogs. Deborah says she has found the breed to be excellent with children and they usually develop a close bond, although they can be rather boisterous at times.

"The Dalmatian is a unique, spotted dog that turns heads when out and about," Deborah says, summing up her favourite breed.

## PROTECTIVE GUARDIAN

The breed's unique appearance is what attracted Sandra Blomeley of Sydney to the Dalmatian. She also believes the breed has good guarding instincts and makes a faithful companion — 12-year-old Max does just that!

"He is a very loyal dog and well trained," Sandra says. "He likes to know where you are at all times so will always be watching you and seems to have this knowledge if anything is wrong. He loves playing, as long as he is in charge, and he is very protective."

Sandra says Max loves swimming and going for walks, but with age he has slowed down a bit and now prefers to take it easy, while still keeping an eye on everyone. She says food is his number-one priority in life.

"Max has always been a city dog and has adapted very well to city living, but he has always had a pretty big yard to run around in," Sandra says.

Nine-year-old Bella loves the country air and is very much at home on an acreage surrounded by horses. Sydney Dal owner, Gael Simonson, says Bella is a very kind dog and a good guard dog.

"Because she's a reasonable size, people think she could be aggressive, but there's just no way. She's very much a people dog and just craves attention," Gael says, adding that Bella is a lovable dog and just wants to be near you. Bella is always dying to come in when Gael gets home and she says that if Bella had it her way, she would be indoors all the time. Gael says Bella is very much at home on their five-acre property — she loves her walks and is terrific with the horses.

She is also very obedient. "She is sociable, totally trustworthy and very tolerant, and we couldn't have picked a nicer-natured dog if we had gone searching," Gael declares.

If it is an energetic, yet elegant, humorous and truly unique breed of dog that you're after, then perhaps the Dalmatian is the breed for you. P

### AT A GLANCE

**Grooming:**
**Exercise:**
**Size:** Large
**Lifespan:** 10–15 years

For more information on the Dalmatian or to contact a local breed club, visit your state canine council website via **ankc.org.au** New Zealand readers can visit **nzkc.org.nz** for information.

The Korat truly is a stunning feline.

# CAPTIVATING KORAT

With its large, vibrant eyes, heart-shaped face and silky blue coat, the Korat is a truly captivating cat. By **Kristie Bradfield**.

**With a long history that can be traced back to the 14th century, the Korat is one of the rarest natural cat breeds still in existence. Known as the "good luck cat" in their ancestral home of Thailand, Korats are often given to newlyweds as wedding gifts. Given their striking appearance and relaxed yet playful temperament, there's little wonder why this breed has captured the hearts of cat fanciers around the world.**

## A PURE LINEAGE

One thing you'll notice about Korat lovers is how proud they are of the breed's history and purity. Eva Krynda from Sydney's inner west fell in love with them more than two years ago. In fact, it was her interest in the Korat's preservation that led her to become a breeder. "The community of Korat breeders around the world is very supportive and works hard to maintain links with breeders in Thailand," Eva says. "All Korats must be able to trace their lineage back to Thailand."

## A BEAUTIFUL BLUE

Appearance isn't everything, but make no mistake: the Korat is a strikingly beautiful cat. They have a single coat which is very short and silky in texture and comes in one colour only: a silver blue. Their widely set eyes are distinctly large, luminous, translucent green or amber. If you follow an imaginary line from the rounded tip of the Korat's chin to the top of its ears and back to the top of its head, you will see the heart shape that has captivated cat lovers. Females are smaller and look daintier while males are sturdier.

Photo: Animax Photography

Although small to medium in size, the Korat is heavier than it looks. Possessing the strength and energy of a well-coiled spring, its smooth, curved lines give it elegance and grace.

If you were to compare a modern Korat to an illustration of one from the 14th century (which you can do — there is an ancient manuscript with illustrations you can view at the National Library in Bangkok) you'll notice that the breed has changed very little over the last 600 years.

## HEALTH

Just over two decades ago it was discovered that a very small number of Korats were predisposed to a degenerative and fatal genetic neurological disorder called Gangliosidosis (GM1 and GM2). With help from Korat breeders all over the world, researchers at the University of California, Davis were able to develop a screening test that identified carriers of this genetic mutation. It is now believed that almost all breeding Korats have been tested for Gangliosidosis, ensuring that kittens don't develop the disorder.

Korats are, on the whole, a very healthy, robust breed with no predisposition to any other illnesses or diseases. They have a long life span of between 16 to 18 years on average but can live up to 20 years or longer.

Because of their short coat Korats require very little grooming; a brush once a week with a soft-bristled brush will keep them looking beautiful. While they are not picky eaters, they do require a nourishing, well-balanced diet.

## EVERY DAY'S AN ADVENTURE

Korats love playtime, and they thrive in an environment where their natural curiosity and playfulness are stimulated. "Korats are entertaining, but they also love to be entertained," says Eva. "They can be easily taught to fetch a favourite cat toy or to walk on a lead. When a Korat kitten or adult chooses you as part of its territory, you can be sure of a special, constant closeness and understanding.

"Korats are energetic and enjoy human company," she says, "so their ideal home is one with a lot of environmental stimulation where they will get lots of attention and play time." They are great family pets but prefer a home environment where children are a little older. "Scratching posts and toys are musts for Korats. Many Korats easily adapt to apartment living as long as they get a lot of companionship," says Eva.

Korats are keen climbers and hunters and, like all cats, should be kept indoors if you don't have a cat run or suitably enclosed space, to ensure the safety of our native wildlife.

## SWEET DISPOSITION

The average Korat can be chatty but generally they only "speak" when they have something to say or when they want to alert you to their needs. They can be a little demanding, but that is only because this breed loves being the centre of attention. "The true Korat temper is a mild cat with a will of iron," says Eva. They are very outgoing, confident, friendly and self-assured, and have no problem adapting to new situations. "They usually have their own opinion about the people who come to the house," says Eva.

## THE KORAT OWNER'S PLEDGE

Korat breeder Eva Krynda says that reputable breeders insist that would-be parents sign the Korat Pledge. Agreeing to the following statements and signing the pledge signifies that you want to share your life with a Korat.

1. I will give the cat love and a good home.
2. I will not let it run unprotected or mistreat it in any way.
3. I will not sell it to a pet store.
4. I will have it spayed or neutered by the age of six months (unless it was sold as a breeding cat). P

## AT A GLANCE

**Grooming:**
**Size:** Small to medium
**Weight:** 3–5kg (when adults)
**Lifespan:** Korats are long-lived with an average lifespan of 16 to 18 years

These ducks like having at least one friend to socialise with.

# MAGICAL MUSCOVY

This duck is one laid-back pet with a difference. By **Carrol Baker**.

**Unlike other domestic duck breeds, the Muscovy didn't descend from the Mallard duck. It originated from the Amazon in South America, and some say they're more like a goose than a duck because they don't quack — instead they make a cute little chirping sound, and sometimes males or drakes will hiss.**

If you're looking for a pet with a difference (and you'll get big yummy eggs as a bonus for three or four months of the year) then the Muscovy is hard to beat.

The breed isn't necessarily a cuddly snuggly pet, but they generally don't mind being picked up, if they've been hand-raised. If you pick them up, hold their legs, suggests Breeder Marilyn Roberts. "They do have sharp claws and you don't want them to accidently scratch you," she says.

They'll enjoy following you around and they're funny to watch, as they waddle about, wagging their tail feathers and chirping away. Marilyn says the Muscovy will even eat out of your hand if they've been hand-raised. And female Muscovies are friendlier than drakes, which can sometimes get just a little bit cranky.

## HAPPY FORAGERS

These ducks will happily scoot around your yard, and forage for grubs, worms, anything they can eat. And they love flies — in summertime they'll help to stop flies annoying you when you have outdoor barbecues.

Marilyn says they are tidy little foragers, unlike chickens that will scatter bark and make a mess. They will mostly keep your gardens intact — unless you have some tasty vegetables like lettuce they can get to, when they'll enjoy having a nibble!

Marilyn suggests feeding your Muscovy

Photo: Big Stock Photo

duckling a food called grower or starter crumble. "It's easy for them to eat, and they need lots of water to drink as well," she says. "As they grow you can give them duck pellets; these are very high in protein." They'll also enjoy leafy greens, fruits and vegetable scraps, to supplement their diet.

## THEY POOP — A LOT!

If you are looking for a duck to fertilise your lawn, then look no further than the Muscovy: they squirt out poop with carefree abandon — just make sure you aren't in their line of fire! They also poop as a form of defence, so if you pick up your duck and they don't feel like a cuddle they may just poop on you!

They are a sturdy breed, with no known health issues. Keep their enclosure clean, and treat them for worms regularly by adding a special liquid to their water.

## AN UNUSUAL BIRD

The most popular colour for the Muscovy is white but they do come in a few different colours, including black and white, light grey, and bronze, to name a few.

They have a rather unusual feature: red facial skin that looks lumpy and bumpy. It's more prominent in males, who can sometimes waggle their facial skin to show other males who is the boss!

## WATER BABIES

These ducks do love water, so make sure they have access to a water supply to wade or splash in — but not too deep when they are ducklings, cautions Marilyn, or they may fall in and drown. "As your duckling grows you can add a small wading pool or baby's bath for them to splash about in," she says.

## GROUNDED DUCKS

The Muscovy is too heavy to take flight for long periods, and some drakes can't fly at all, as they are just too big to get off the ground no matter how hard they try. But with an energetic flap of their wings females can make it up and over an enclosure; sometimes they'll fly into a tree. They like to be up high so they can be on the lookout for predators, so make sure you either clip one wing or have a fully enclosed run for them.

Even if they range freely during the day, the Muscovy needs to be safely locked up at night because predators like foxes might make a meal of them. And if you have ducklings, they can't be allowed to range free at all until they're a few months old. If they are out in the open predators might just swoop down and take them. To keep your ducklings safe and warm inside the enclosure, pop them in a snug, clean box that is fully open on one side so they can easily get in and out.

## HAPPY TWOSOMES

These delightful ducks will love your company, but they also like hanging out with their own kind too, so *PETS* recommends buying ducks in pairs. That way they can also keep each other company when you aren't there. The Muscovy usually gets on with other feathered family members like chickens too.

White is the most popular Muscovy colour.

## AT A GLANCE

**Grooming:**
**Size:** Medium to large
**Weight:** Ducks 3kg, drakes 4kg
**Lifespan:** 7–8 years

# COMING UP...

## IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *PETS*

### TOP TRAINING ADVICE

### HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PET FOOD

Is your pet getting the best?

### TO THE RESCUE

When dogs do good

ON SALE MARCH 31

# SOLUTIONS

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

1. Bunny tail missing
2. Paintbrush missing
3. Extra paint can
4. Egg pattern different
5. Bowtie missing
6. Extra egg 7. Bunny ear smaller 8. Egg larger.

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## MAZE

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## FIND-A-WORD

| C | T | I | B | B | A | R | X | E | R | E | N | A | R | O | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| I | C | H | I | C | J | K | R | O | I | A | K | K | E | N | O |
| C | E | H | N | C | H | F | U | U | Y | N | C | H | I | H | A |
| H | I | N | C | R | W | A | E | S | V | A | I | A | G | C | R |
| A | E | R | T | T | E | R | R | E | F | C | H | G | A | R | B |
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By Peter Clarke

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS...

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# PETS

SMALL ANIMAL SPECIAL

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**4 TRICKS** to teach your rabbit

## TO THE rescue!

Who's saving our bunnies?

## CASHMERE LOP

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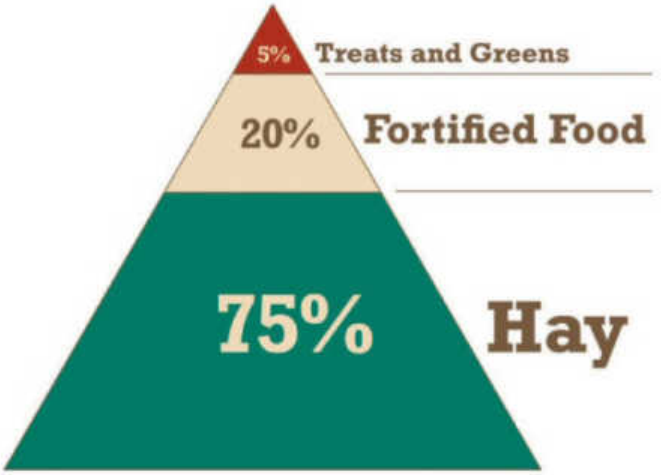

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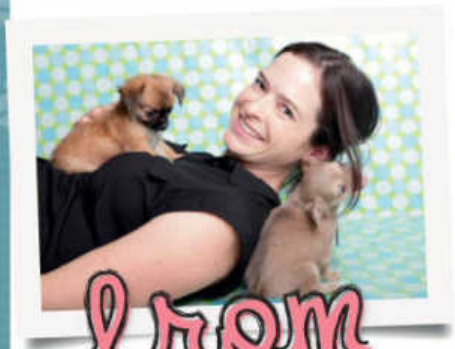

# from the editor

Hello and welcome to one of my favourite issues of the year — the Small Animal Special! This flip book is packed with some of our favourite small animals that we hope you enjoy, too.

Ever since I was asked to help out judging a Rabbit Fanciers' show a few years back, I've had a soft spot in my heart for bunnies. It's for this reason I decided to interview Kim from the Rabbit Rescue Sanctuary, a group that's all about rescuing and rehoming rabbits. We often hear a lot about rescue cats and dogs — I hope that learning more about the bunnies who need new forever homes inspires you to fit one into your household.

There are lots of other fabulous features in store for you too, so whether you're after a rescue or just a small pet that you'll love fur-ever, we're sure to have an article to interest you.

Lots of hugs for you and your pet,

Lauren xo

**Lauren, editor**
**pets@universalmagazines.com.au**

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Every year, many pet rabbits are left searching for a new home.

# TO THE RESCUE

*PETS* talks to The Rabbit Sanctuary founder **Kim Cooney** on the great work this organisation does when it comes to rescuing rabbits.

**PETS:** How did The Rabbit Sanctuary start?

**Kim:** Eight years ago, my husband and I came across an abandoned rabbit and realised that there were no specific welfare services for pet rabbits. We were shocked and decided that we would purchase a property to provide a Rabbit Sanctuary for rabbits in need of rescue.

We came to realise that it was not only rabbits that needed help — it was people,

Photo: Big Stock Photo

## CASE STUDY

**Kim tells us about one rabbit's story that truly touched her heart.**

One of our most heartwarming rabbit rescues was to be asked to take in 14 laboratory rabbits from a Queensland research facility. These bunnies were born in and lived out their lives in small steel cages and never saw the sun or felt the wind until they arrived at The Rabbit Sanctuary, where they found the joys of running, digging and freedom of movement.

too! Rabbit owners from the southern states of Australia who had to move to Queensland, where rabbit keeping is illegal, faced the heartbreaking dilemma of what to do with their beloved pet rabbits.

The Rabbit Sanctuary was established to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome abandoned pet rabbits and to help rabbit owners unable to keep their pets.

**PETS:** On average, how many rabbits do you rescue each year?

**Kim:** Last year we rescued over 100 from Queensland and hundreds more from New South Wales.

**PETS:** What's the most common reason you've found for people giving up their bunnies?

**Kim:** Impulse purchasing baby rabbits from pet shops, landlords not allowing pets, and people moving to Queensland or overseas are the main reasons for rabbit surrender in this country.

**PETS:** If people find orphan baby bunnies, what should they do?

**Kim:** Often people find baby wild rabbits. Unless the nest is in danger, people should leave the babies in place because the mummy bunny won't be far away. Mother rabbits purposely stay away from their babies so that they don't draw the attention of predators to their nest. People often think the babies are abandoned.

**PETS:** You believe rabbits should be a part of the family; tell us more about this philosophy.

**Kim:** For too long people in Australia have thought of rabbits as a pet in a cage at the bottom of the yard. This is a lonely, sad life for a little bunny. Often bunnies just die in these isolated cages as no one is monitoring their behaviour or eating habits so sickness is not detected. By keeping pet rabbits in the home with you, you come to know the enchanting qualities of a house rabbit who will sit with you and watch TV, cuddle with you on the lounge and follow you around.

**PETS:** How can people assist The Rabbit Sanctuary?

**Kim:** People can donate to help us with our high vet bills. They can become a rabbit foster carer, or adopt a bunny or two! Sharing our bunnies for adoption on Facebook also helps them to get homes (**facebook.com/rabbit.sanctuary**).

If you would like to donate, please text 0416 062 947 for details.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit The Rabbit Sanctuary Australia's website: **rabbitsanctuary.com.au**

Guinea pigs are herd animals.

# GOOD FOR GUINEAS

They're cute, cuddly and make wonderful family pets, but do you know what you need to do to give your Guinea pig the best possible care? **Tim Falk** investigates the five essential things you can do to raise a happy and healthy Guinea pig.

**If ever there was proof of the old saying that good things come in small packages, Guinea pigs would have to be it. These adorable little bundles of fur are low-maintenance pets and, for the right owner, they make wonderfully cuddly companions.**

"Guinea pigs make great pets for families that have limited space," explains Emma Nicholson from Sirocco Cavy Stud. "They don't need a lot of room, are relatively cheap to feed and are great for sitting on your lap watching TV in the evening.

"They don't need to be taken for a walk, they don't bark at your neighbours and they don't scratch up your furniture. I love how even though they're so small, they each have their own personalities too."

Guinea pigs, which are also known as cavies,

Photos: Big Stock Photo

## WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT GUINEA PIGS?

**Sydney small animal vet Dr James Crowley outlines some of the benefits of keeping Guinea pigs as pets:**

- low maintenance
- gentle, good for young kids
- require little space
- small size
- quiet nature
- can become very used to handling.

make great pets for many Australians young and old. But if you're thinking of adding one of these cute little critters to your family, do you know all the ins and outs of caring for your new pet? Here are five key care and maintenance tips to ensure that your Guinea pig is always in tip-top shape.

## 1. EATING RIGHT

The right diet is essential for the health of any Guinea pig, and the greater part of a Guinea pig's diet should be fresh, green grass. If that is hard to come by, a good quality grassy hay is suitable as well, Emma says.

"You will need to supplement the grassy/hay diet with fresh vegetables that are high in vitamin C, as Guinea pigs, like us, do not produce their own vitamin C and must consume it daily as part of their diet," she explains. "Red capsicum, parsley, oranges and broccoli are all good choices. Limit the broccoli, though, as it can make their tummies upset in large amounts — much the same way that cabbage and iceberg lettuce can do and should also be limited."

## 2. LOOKING GOOD

We all like to look our best and Guinea pigs are no different, but keeping on top of grooming for your furry friend is about much more than just appearance. But if you own a short-coated Guinea pig, Emma says they shouldn't require any grooming.

"They're very good at keeping themselves clean," she explains. "White or light-coloured Guinea pigs may benefit from a bath if they get urine staining in their bellies. Long-coated Guinea pigs will need to have their hair trimmed regularly if you don't plan to show them at a cavy show — if this is the case, the hair can never be cut while the Guinea pig has a show career."

## 3. LIVING LARGE

A crucial aspect in looking after a cavy is ensuring that you have the right housing setup to give your pet a home where they feel safe and comfortable, and where all their needs can be met.

Sydney small animal veterinarian Dr James Crowley recommends a large cage for your cavy — "the bigger the better," he says. "Ensure the cage is well ventilated as Guinea pigs do not tolerate heat very well. Provide plenty of hiding places; indoor housing is recommended to protect from predators."

In terms of bedding, shredded paper, hay and straw are all suitable options, while Dr James says it's important to change your cavy's bedding regularly.

Finally, housing Guinea pigs with rabbits might seem like a good idea but, due to the risk of disease transmission, it's definitely not recommended.

## 4. PARASITE PROTECTION

How can you keep your cavy safe from any nasty parasites?

"We treat our Guinea pigs every three months with a diluted version of Ivermectin specifically for Guinea pigs. It is a fantastic drug for treating internal and external parasites, but needs to be administered correctly," Emma says.

Ask your vet for advice on the best parasite prevention treatments for your cavy. Dr James also offers some other useful tips for keeping parasites at bay.

"Mites are a common infestation for Guinea pigs. When a Guinea pig is stressed, or immunosuppressed from other illness, the normal mites living on their coat can overpopulate," he explains.

Guinea pigs are a great low-maintenance pet.

With this in mind, make sure to:

- regularly clean the hutch/cage
- feed a high-quality diet
- ensure your cavy's living conditions are clean and sanitary
- minimise your pet's stress levels.

## 5. LOVED UP

Last but not least, it's crucial that you make sure your Guinea pig gets all the love, attention and social interaction they need.

"Guinea pigs are herd animals and do best in social groups, or at least pairs," Emma explains. "Left on their own, they may get depressed."

When it comes to human attention, however, some cavies crave all the love you can give them while others prefer to be left alone.

But all Guinea pigs have some things in common: "They all like to have somewhere soft to sleep, and love crawling inside of hidey houses and cuddle sacks. These are the things that make a Guinea pig happy," Emma says.

"They will squeak when you walk past to let you know they are hungry, or that they want to interact with you. If they cower, they may need a little longer to get to know you, or they may just be a more shy Guinea pig."

Emma has one final piece of advice for anyone thinking of adding a cavy to their family: "If you like small, fluffy critters and don't mind having to clean their cage every few days, then Guinea pigs will be the pet for you," she says.

"You will need to be patient to let your Guinea pig get to know you, but it is worth it in the end when they respond to your voice and run towards you, not away from you!"

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There are many different things you can teach your rabbit to do.

# RABBIT OUT OF A HAT

Rabbit tricks aren't just about being pulled from a hat. By **Katie Cincotta**.

**When it comes to magic shows, the white rabbit being pulled out of the hat always makes for great entertainment. How did the fluffy bunny in the cute bow tie just appear from out of nowhere, his long ears sticking out of a black top hat as the magician parades him around the room amid a dust full of glitter?**

The problem is, the bunny is only ever the prop and never gets to shine in his own right. It's time for magicians to take a back seat as we show you tricks you can teach your rabbit.

## WALK WITH SWAG

Dogs and cats get all the attention for walking around on a leash. Bah, humbug. Rabbits can do that too. Some might argue they look even cuter strolling the streets in a cute little harness that fastens around their neck and under their waist.

Carolyn Sugden, who runs The Bluey & Alice Bunny Refuge in Cockatoo, up in The Dandenong Ranges, says her rabbits will happily walk around on a lead but there's not much need for it on her acreage in the hills.

Getting them to use a pet door was the next step, and it's a trick that's clever as well as practical, letting them head outside for toilet time.

"My rabbits come and go through the doggy door. You just show them the door and stand on one side, put them through, and they come back again. They just learn. One of our rabbits doesn't even have a litter tray inside," says Carolyn.

Photo: Big Stock Photo

## PLAY FETCH

When Flemish Giant rabbit Mason showed an interest in fetching a ball, his owner Kim was both surprised and delighted.

"Yes, Mason will fetch his ball when thrown, but being a bunny he doesn't always do it on demand, only when it suits him. We just continually throw it and say 'Where's your ball?' and if he likes he will go fetch it."

Kim sent me a video as proof of his skills: it shows Mason grabbing the ball, putting it in his mouth and then hopping away, as if he'd won a prize — highly adorable.

Carolyn found Mason a buddy from her adopted ranks and now his owners are teaching his Sally — a ruby-eyed white from New Zealand — to play ball too.

"It started with an American-shaped football with a bell in it, and just like a dog or a cat, you keep repeating the same action. Rabbits really are amazing creatures," says refuge owner Carolyn.

The bunny adorer says rabbits are social creatures and need to be around people, and games like fetch, with a ball or a toy, are a great bonding experience and a lot of fun.

Imagine how many likes on Instagram you could get if you filmed your rabbit in slow motion, running through the grass to chase a ball?

## JUMPING JACK RABBITS

Obstacles courses aren't just for feisty Kelpies and spring-jumping Border Collies. YouTube has some incredible videos of rabbits doing agility, running from station to station.

North Metro TV's documentary *Hop, Jump and Play* showed the Minnesota Companion Rabbit Society put their bunnies excitedly through the tunnels, see saws, bridges and hurdles. Some had been doing it for years and were totally attuned to their owner's directions as they sped through the indoor course.

Just like obedience training, the rabbits are encouraged on a lead with positive praise, some of them clearing more than six hurdles at a time.

One Rabbit Grand National Final saw Swedish champion Cherie jump all the hurdles in 7.5 seconds, without knocking a single one.

## CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Of course once you've got your rabbit's attention for training, there are so many tricks you could try with them. When my mother was a teenager and studying art, her rabbit Harry would sit on the table where she was drawing and bring the pencil up to her in his mouth.

Other tricks you might like to think about are getting your bunny to stand up on his back legs, to sit in his hutch, and to do a spin following your finger.

Using a clicker, hand gestures, vocal commands and a food reward (pellets or small pieces of carrot or celery), you'll find that many rabbits like the chance to perform, and will happily follow your cue to show you what they can do.

The rules are pretty simple. Choose a quiet clicker that doesn't startle your rabbit. Reward your rabbit for the right behaviour with a click and a treat, and try not to make training sessions longer than 15 minutes.

If you're really keen, get a copy of *Getting Started: Clicking with Your Rabbit* by Joan Orr, which has lots of training tips like jumping on cue or through a hoop.

Hey, get a whole routine going and you could run a Rabbit Magic Show for your friends and then load it up on YouTube. Show the world that rabbits are smart as well as cute. Hashtag #beautyandbrains

### REMINDER:

Never force your rabbit to complete any trick, or punish it for doing something not as you'd like it. Reward-based training is always the best form.

The Cashmere Lop is a sweet and cuddly pet.

# THE QUALITY CASHMERE

The Cashmere Lop is one of the friendlier of the rabbit breeds, making them a popular choice for families, if hard to get your hands on. **Melanie Hearse** chats to long term West Australian breeder **Melissa Jeffes** of Tinseltown Rabbits about these cute little balls of fluff.

**Always up for a cuddle and less active than their miniature counterpart — though they love a good play session as much as they do a snuggle — the Cashmere Lop is a very placid breed of rabbit. They're also friendly with strangers, and will happily greet them and accept a pat. Like many other breeds of rabbit, Melissa says Cashmere Lops are hard to come by in Australia — though not impossible.**

"There aren't many reputable breeders with Cashmere Lops available as pets, but they are lovely rabbits with a friendly, inquisitive personality," she says. "There is no nationally recognised breeders registry for rabbits; experienced breeders are usually members of their local club. Cashmeres are high maintenance in terms of grooming, so it is best to wait for a rabbit from a breeder who is a member of their state club, since a reputable breeder will take care to ensure you are given

*Photos: Trish Ratford, The Rabbit Patch (therabbitpatch.com.au)*

one with a good coat that is easier to keep free from knots, and in good health — and be a wealth of information about caring for them and keeping them well."

Melissa also recommends choosing a male as a pet. "The females are generally preoccupied with reproducing, and are often more aloof than the males. They may also be more aggressive due to their hormones." On that note, it's highly recommended pet bunnies should be desexed. As well as reducing antisocial behaviour with male rabbits, it can reduce uterine cancers in females.

She says it's important not to bring home a bunny under eight weeks of age, as they still rely on their mothers for healthy gut bacteria.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Weighing in around 2.5kg, the Cashmere Lop is a fluffball with a wide face and medium length floppy ears that generally drop at around three to six weeks of age, and they come in many colours. Melissa says like other rabbit breeds, they consume a diet of rabbit pellets or mix designed specifically for rabbits, meadow hay, oaten hay, grass, and safe fruits and vegetables including celery heads, bok choy, carrots and broccoli — though lettuce will make them very ill, especially iceberg.

"A steady supply of hay to eat is important for a rabbit's health — they cannot regurgitate, so they rely on roughage to move things through their system. Like cats, they are prone to hairballs, and eating hay keeps these passing through their system rather than sitting in the gut."

## GROOM ME BABY!

The Cashmere Lop requires regular grooming, owing to its long coat, which can reach between one and two inches in length, and is prone to knotting. Melissa says you'll need to take care when grooming them, as knots can be easily missed. "If you blow into their coat, or use a blow-dryer on a cool setting, you should be able to see their skin. If you can't, then it's back to the grooming brush as there are still knots in there!"

They require even more frequent grooming when they are babies, and when they moult, which happens around four times a year. Once or twice a fortnight should do the trick for adults, and a couple of times a week for babies and moulters is ideal.

Also be aware that owing to their long coat Cashmere Lops tend to suffer more in the heat. To help them with this, you can bring them inside or monitor them more often; alternatively, Melissa says, some people have them shaved or clipped to keep them comfortable.

"Another option is to consider a Dwarf Lop — they have a similar personality, but none of the grooming issues that long haired rabbits like the Cashmere has. Cashmeres are beautiful rabbits, but it is important you're aware of how much grooming they'll require; if you aren't consistent with it, their coat will get very matted very quickly, which will be hard to remedy."

Cashmere Lops will also need their nails trimmed regularly, and Melissa says you should check their nail length monthly. She explains that rabbits have evolved to dig and burrow, so in the wild their nails wear down naturally. "Ask your breeder or vet if you're not confident that you know when they need a clip." Regular clipping is important as it prevents nails from splitting or growing at odd angles — and will help keep you scratch-free!

"If you bought your rabbit from a reputable breeder, then they will show you how to do it — or feel free to ask them. It might take you a little practice, and you need to take care not to cut the blood vessels, though you can dab on a little cornflour to help stem the blood." She says some rabbits may allow you to lie them on their back, while others will be happier sitting on your lap or a table.

"Remember to lay a towel on your lap first to help with wriggly rabbits, or you can wrap them in the towel," she says, adding that rabbits are no different to dogs or cats when it comes to clipping — none really enjoy the process, so take it slow and steady, and don't be surprised if they try to pull their legs away.

It's not hard to see why people all over the world have fallen for this sweet pet.

## ORAL CARE

Looking after their teeth is another key part of health care. Melissa says as with any rabbit, their teeth are continually growing and need to be checked regularly to prevent malocclusion, a condition where the incisors do not align, and the top teeth don't overlap the bottom as they should. "This can be hereditary, though buying through a reputable breeder will significantly reduce the risk of teeth problems that are inherited, or caused by not being worn down owing to their diet or possibly by an injury."

Melissa says you should make sure your rabbit has a variety of food textures to eat to help with good dental care. "They require different chewing actions to keep their teeth in tip top shape."

If they do have a problem, their teeth will need to be trimmed, which Melissa says is best done by a vet. "If left unattended the teeth can grow up into the nostrils or lips or gums or into the sides of the mouth, causing your bunny extreme discomfort and possible weight loss."

## WHAT'S UP DOC?

Melissa says a healthy Lop will have clear and bright eyes, a glossy coat, top front teeth that overlap bottom teeth, a healthy appetite, clean ears and a curious and alert personality.

Signs your rabbit may be experiencing health problems include diarrhoea or faeces strung together with hair, or very small or non-existent faeces. Flaking or dry skin, which could be caused by mites, bald patches not related to

shedding or moulting, or abscesses or lumps on the skin are also possible indicators of illness and will need treatment.

A lack of appetite, as with most creatures, is a sign you should see your vet, as is difficulty walking. Melissa says it's a good idea to find yourself a vet that is familiar with rabbit health before your bunny becomes ill.

## HANDLE WITH CARE

There are a few diseases that are especially relevant to all rabbits, including the Cashmere Lop. Melissa says calicivirus is an disease introduced into Australia that has no cure, which is why vaccination is highly recommended. "Calicivirus can be spread to your rabbit by birds, insects, rodents, mosquitoes, fleas or even yourself, acting as a host if you have visited another rabbit and are not aware of its presence. It can be spread by your clothes, your shoes, even your car, if you have touched other rabbit's objects."

Myxomatosis was introduced into Australia in 1950 to reduce pest numbers, but resistance to the virus has increased and less deadly strains of the virus remain. Myxomatosis is transmitted from rabbit to rabbit via biting insects, including mosquitoes and fleas. "Our pet rabbits possess no resistance to myxomatosis and mortality rates are between 95 and 100 per cent. There is no vaccination available in Australia. Most rabbits die within 10 to 14 days of infection."

Pasteurella, aka snuffles, usually starts as an infection in the sinuses and can spread to the eyes or organs in the body and may encourage pneumonia, cause abscesses in the head and jaw, or infect the inner ear causing the head to tilt. "This is highly contagious, and your rabbit will need to be confined on his own. As your rabbit's carer, you will need to be very vigilant with hygiene as you could keep reinfecting your rabbit."

## HOUSING AND CARE

Being a larger rabbit, Cashmere Lops need a larger sized hutch so they have ample space to stretch out. The British Rabbit Council recommends you choose a spot in your yard that is out of the elements as much as possible (this includes direct sunlight, draughts, and rain) as rabbits are susceptible to heat and cold. It's also recommended that you choose a hutch with short legs at least 220mm long, as hutches placed directly on the ground will quickly become damp and cold; and choose a wood hutch over an alloy one, as it is less likely to overheat.

The Council also suggests that wood shavings make ideal bedding as they are clean and absorbent, and straw and hay on top of the shavings can help provide insulation. Dusty or old hay or straw can get stuck in their eyes and nose and cause irritation, so check that your hay smells sweet and not musty. The Council recommends against sawdust for the same reason.

You'll need to completely change their bedding once a week, and as rabbits like to use corners for toileting, you'll need to change these out more often — around every third day. Scrub their hutch out thoroughly with disinfectants once a month, putting your pet somewhere safe while it dries.

Be aware that rabbits are master escape artists and very tricky to catch — only let your Cashmere Lop free in your garden under constant supervision and if you are positive there is no escape. Remember that they can squeeze through small holes and gnaw them bigger as well as dig under fences. And if you have other pets, be sure to contain them before letting out your Lop, as a bouncing bunny may be hard for them to resist.

### AT A GLANCE

**Grooming:**
**Exercise:**
**Size:** Small
**Lifespan:** Around 10 years

# kidZONE

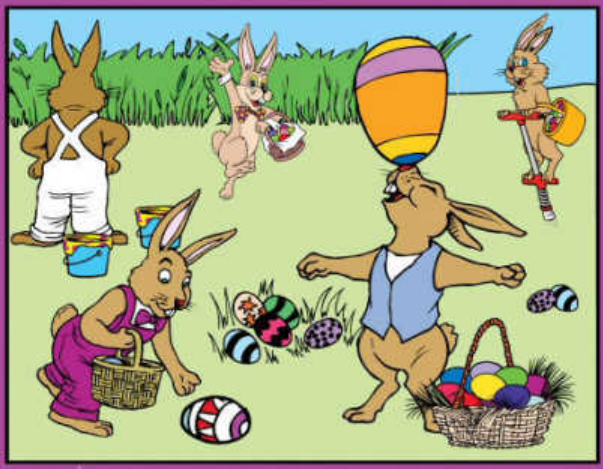
FOUR PAGES OF PUZZLE FUN!

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 78

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the eight differences between these two Easter-themed pictures?

© Lovatts Puzzles



# MAZE

Help the Easter Bunny find his way to all those eggs.

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 78

# FIND-A-WORD

Can you find all 16 small animals in our find-a-word? Words can go up, down, backwards, forwards, diagonal and backwards diagonal, so keep your eyes peeled.

| C | T | I | B | B | A | R | X | E | R | E | N | A | R | O | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | K | E | N | C | A | S | H | M | E | R | E | L | O | P | L |
| I | C | H | I | C | J | K | R | O | I | A | K | K | E | N | O |
| C | E | H | N | C | H | F | U | U | Y | N | C | H | I | H | A |
| H | I | N | C | R | W | A | E | S | V | A | I | A | G | C | R |
| A | E | R | T | T | E | R | R | E | F | C | H | G | A | R | B |
| R | R | A | E | S | R | E | A | N | C | H | C | A | O | A | R |
| G | A | O | L | G | H | S | U | G | O | A | R | T | E | A | E |
| A | G | V | G | C | S | E | I | N | N | U | B | G | H | A | T |
| U | I | N | I | N | T | P | A | I | K | R | Y | C | A | V | H |
| I | R | I | P | E | A | O | I | L | C | V | B | L | U | E | T |
| N | E | E | H | E | R | J | K | K | A | O | N | G | U | R | L |
| E | G | G | N | A | F | H | M | C | I | Z | A | R | D | H | E |
| A | D | I | N | E | T | B | L | U | E | T | O | N | G | U | E |
| I | U | A | C | H | I | C | K | D | A | F | E | F | I | N | C |
| G | B | C | Z | E | B | R | A | F | I | N | C | H | C | H | I |

SOLUTIONS ON PAGE 78

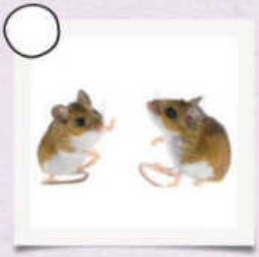
Photos: stock.xchng, Big Stock Photo

CASHMERE LOP

GUINEA PIG

DUCKLING

ANGORA



MOUSE

RAT

FERRET

CHICKEN

BLUE TONGUE

PIGLET

MINI GOAT

BUDGERIGAR

REX RABBIT

ZEBRA FINCH

CAVY

BUNNIES

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RSPCA
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